A STUDY OF POLYANDRY ooc

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CHAPTER 2

THE POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS (TIYAS), KAMMALANS, AND OTHER ARTISAN CASTES OF KERALA

Anthropological research in Kerala is not, and never has been, easy. 114
Human society there, as we shall see from what follows, is extremely 184
complex, being made up of innumerable Hindu castes, sub-castes and outcastes, to which must be added other non-Hindu communities, such as the Moslems, Christians, and Jews. To gain an insight into these, or even, as in our case, into only a section of them – namely those practising polyandry – is a painstaking affair, especially when one realizes, as one very soon does, that the customs of a single ethnic group are by no means uniform in the whole state and often vary radically from north to south.

The climate, too, is a problem. Most of Kerala is damp and tropical 114
all the year round, with a very wet period during the summer monsoon [132]
from June to October. The record density of the population makes for [161]
poor and inadequate quarters in which to live. Communications are bad, [484]
the rainy season disrupting traffic quite seriously with floods and high winds because of the physical nature of the land, which can be described as follows.

A. KERALA, A DESCRIPTION

1. ENVIRONMENT

The State of Kerala stretches, today, from the boundary of South Canara 131
in Mysore State in the north, to Cape Comorin in the south, the latter being the most southerly point of the Indian continent. It is an extremely narrow belt of coastland, only five miles wide at some points and never exceeding seventy at its widest, which is at the Palghat gap. It is
bordered on the west by the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean, in which [133]
are to be found the Laccadive islands, administratively part of the State, and on the east, by the imposing range of mountains called the Western

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

131 Ghats, the height of which varies between five and over eight thousand [133] feet.

Before 1957, when the new State of Kerala came into being with the [631] reorganization of the Indian States, the area included the large Madras district of Malabar, the French possession of Mahe, and the princely State of Cochin amalgamated with that of Travancore. The respective capitals were Calicut (today Kozhikode), Ernakulam, and Trivandrum, the French possession being limited to the town bearing the same name as itself.

133 All rivers in Kerala, except those of the more elevated taluk of the Wynaad, run from east to west, cutting the coastal strip into sections. Inland, however, vast stretches of practically stagnant water, comparable to lagoons, known locally under the name of backwaters, extend down the whole length of the State, affording uninterrupted communication.

Geologically, Kerala is a low tableland of red laterite and clay, fringed 133 by a coast of alluvial formation. Laterite, from the name given to it by 134 Dr Buchanan in 1800, is really a soil of decomposed gneiss, from which the Western Ghats are made. When dug up and left to the action of sun and rain, only the skeleton of hard material remains, sponge-like in appearance, from which blocks of building material are cut. It is not very resistant or long-lived, and gradually disintegrates into a red type of gravel, more or less finely granulated.

134 The resultant soil or loam is a well-balanced mixture of clay and sand, admittedly poor in organic matter, but well-suited to the special types of crops which have given Kerala its wealth. Thus rice, coconuts, pepper 241 and betel, arecanuts, jack fruits, mangoes and cashews, do extraordinarily well in it, helped as they are by the damp, warm climate constant 132 throughout the year. There are two monsoons in Kerala, the south-west monsoon of the summer, which is the principal one, and the north-west monsoon of the autumn which, lately, often fails.

137 In appearance, the landscape of Kerala varies very little from the coastal line to the towering peaks of the Western Ghats. Along the beach of fine sand, coconut trees in an unending perspective, raise their gently waving palm leaves in a manner reminiscent of the South Seas and of Ceylon. Jack fruit trees and mangoes behind them, being of a darker coloured foliage, give depth to the romantic scene. It is among [361] these that the houses of the inhabitants of Kerala are to be found. Unlike the rest of India, human habitations are not grouped together here in [351] villages and towns. Each stands isolated from its neighbours, in a garden-like compound surrounded by a stout fence of brambles or of

thorns and planted with big-leaved plantains, flowering bushes such as 137
the hibiscus, and tall, slender arecanut palms, their graceful, shining 351
trunks entwined with betel and pepper creepers. Here and there, a red 342
tiled roof denotes the dwelling of some high-caste person, while else- 554
where, the thatched roofs of the ordinary houses reveal the low social
status of the majority.

Red laterite dust roads criss-cross this green scenery, highways and 491
lesser paths upon which a continual stream of men and women, scantily [484]
clad in white, are forever on the move. Dry river beds in the spring and
swollen, muddy torrents in the monsoon season, are crossed together
with the broad expanse of calm, smooth backwaters on the way east to
the inland red laterite hills. It is here that the majority of the terraced 241
paddy fields are met with, green and flooded in the summer and dried
up, with tufts of yellow straw stalks the rest of the year, their fringes
strewn with rustling, restless coconut trees.

2. MYTHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Hindu Brahmin tradition has it, so I heard from my informants in this 173
region, that Kerala (*Malayalam* or *Keralabhumi* as it is called in the *Keralolpatti* and *Kerala Mahatmyam* chronicles) was created from the sea by Parasu Raman, the axe-wielding avatar of the god Vishnu, and given to those Brahmins called Nambudri for their perpetual possession and enjoyment. The myth, to which even the modern Hindu inhabitants of Kerala subscribe, is no doubt symbolic of two things: the geological origin of the land at the foot of the Ghats, which appears really to have been uncovered from the sea in some ancient natural upheaval, and the colonization of Kerala by Aryan invaders from the north in a remote and ill-defined past.

The mythological tale, in detail, is that Parasu Raman was once ordered by his father to kill his mother, because the latter had been seen by her husband smiling at a youth when she was fetching water at the well. The son, in filial obedience to his father, carried out the order, but having done so, attempted in every possible way to atone for the abominable crime of matricide. He consulted Brahmins who requested of him that he exterminate twenty two generations of the rival warrior caste of Kshattryas. This he did, but the Brahmins were not satisfied. Parasu Raman then climbed the Western Ghats and, from the highest point, cast his axe into the sea calling upon it to withdraw, which it did. The land of Kerala thus came into existence and Vishnu's avatar, the

173 sage of Malabar, gave it to the priestly caste of Brahmins in perpetual holding.

These Brahmins now declared themselves satisfied and moved to take it over, but were at first frightened away by the aboriginal *Naga* (serpent) worshippers. Other Brahmins were then brought in from the north and instructed by Parasu Raman to propitiate the serpents by installing them as their household gods. He also organized the priestly settlers into sixty [611] four villages (*gramams*) and directed them to adopt succession through the mother (*marumakkathayam*), which last injunction they disobeyed, with the single exception of Payyanur in Chirakkal, where Brahmins observe matrilineal descent to this day. He then brought in Sudras (Nayars) from the country east of the Ghats (that is from the Tamil country) and entrusted them with the protection of the Brahmins; they were organized into *taras* and to them were given the duties of supervising, executing and issuing orders, so that rights in Kerala should not be curtailed or suffered to fall into disuse.

173 From this nebulous, mythical past, history later slowly emerges. Al- 175 ready, one thousand years B.C., Solomon is reputed to have traded with the south-west coast of India. Commercial contacts with the Near East did actually exist in this part of the sub-continent much earlier than anywhere else in India, the sea acting as a medium of communication. With the discovery of the south-west trade winds by Hippalus in the 1st century A.D., the Romans carried on the profitable relation, and they are reputed to have even had a settlement at Cranganore in Travancore. In 52 A.D., St Thomas landed there, according to local tradition, and converted some Brahmin families to Christianity, thus laying the foundation of the present-day Malabar Christian communities. During the following decades, as a result of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus in 70 A.D., the first Jews are reputed to have arrived in Kerala to settle at Mattancheri in Cochin.

175 In the 3rd century A.D., the Brahmins called in a king to rule them, and the Perumal dynasty started with Keya Perumal, who came from Keyapuram, east of the Ghats. Trade with other parts of the world continued during this period, the Arabs arriving from the Hadramaut and the Persian Gulf in the 9th century. The Chinese, however, are said by Marco Polo to have been in full control of the Malabar marts when that great traveller visited the area in the 13th century. Shortly afterwards, the last of the Perumals, Cheruman Perumal, was converted to Islam and departed to Mecca never to return.

Before leaving, Cheruman Perumal put his kingdom in order, it is

175 said, by dividing it up between the rajas of Travancore, Cochin, Kolattiri, Kurumbranad, Walluvanad and others. To the Zamorin of Calicut, who was later to become so famous, he left only his sword with the recommendation to "die, kill and annex". The latter potentate and his descendants took the injunction seriously and very quickly in the two following centuries, the 14th and 15th, assumed a leading role on the Kerala stage. They encouraged Arab trade in spices and other commodities, and by their scrupulous honesty and absolute security of commerce, obtained and held it for fully two hundred years.

It was then that the first Europeans arrived on the scene. The Portugese came to beign with, in an attempt to break the Moors' monopoly of Far Eastern products. Coming into conflict with their Mohammedan rivals and with their protégé the Zamorin, they successfully supported the raja of Cochin against these and thus gained a footing on the coast while taking over command of the sea. They were only forced out by the Dutch in the 17th century (although they still hold Goa further north, to this day), and the Dutch in turn were superseded by the British and the French, who settled respectively at Tellicherry and at Mahe, from which fortified places they fought each other for supremacy in the pepper trade for another two centuries.

175 631 648 In the 18th century, the Mohammedan rulers of Mysore descended on Kerala and, after forcibly converting a great number of its inhabitants to Islam, annexed large tracts of it. Tipu Sultan, however, the ally of Napolean, fell foul of the British East India Company, which eventually defeated him at Seringapatnam in 1792. British supremacy in Kerala dates from that year and a system of farming out revenue to the local rajas was instituted. It proved to be a mistaken method of collection, and was the cause of the serious rebellions of Kerala Varma, Raja of the Padinnara Kovilagam of Kottayam, the Pazhassi raja, otherwise known as Pychy raja, in 1797 and from 1800 to 1805. With their termination, the British took over direct administration of Malabar, while leaving Cochin and Travancore to that of their rajas. They were to keep it until 1947 when India was given her independence.

Two years later, the States of Travancore and Cochin were merged to form a United State under the Maharaja of Travancore. In 1953, France finally relinquished her hold on Mahe, and in 1957, the whole coastal region from South Canara to Cape Comorin became the State of *Kerala* which we know today. The name has been variously interpreted as meaning either "land of coconut trees" or "land of the Cheras", an ancient Hindu dynasty of south India. [101]

3. THE PEOPLE

161 [212] The new State is one of the most densely populated in the whole of India, as well as one in which the percentage of literacy is highest. Unfortunately no current statistics are available, as Kerala is of very recent creation, but some idea can be gained from the fact that in the Ponani taluk of the former district of Malabar, according to the Madras Government Statistical Atlas, 1935, there were 626,500 inhabitants, or 1,471 per square mile. The rate of increase of the population is also [871] [212] very rapid: about 11% every ten years. The percentage of education is highest in Travancore, Cochin. In 1951, 53.8% were reported literate (*Census of India*, Vol. xii).

114 The people of Kerala are a very complex collection and it would be hopeless to attempt to give a full and detailed description of them. The reader is referred to those works on the subject which have already been published, the titles of some of which can be found in the Bibliography. 105 564 In order to understand, however, the extraordinary way in which Kerala society is partitioned into a number of individual groups, and how each of these has its own particular customs and ways, as for instance polyandry, it is essential to give a general idea of the different castes and subcastes which compose the population, with a brief outline of their social organization and professional occupations.

Rather naturally, as is to be expected from the mythological version of the origins of the country mentioned above, the summit of the hierarchy is occupied by the *Nambudri Brahmin*. As W. Logan very aptly puts it in his *Malabar* (Madras, 1887): "His person is holy; his directions command, his movements are a procession; his meals nectar; he is the holiest of human beings, the representative of God on earth." (p. 127). There are eight subdivisions to the caste, some more holy than others, by reason of the occupations which they pursue. Other Brahmins in Malabar, who have come from outside and are thus somewhat looked down upon, are the Pattars, Embrandiris, Tamil and Konkani Brahmins.

[463] [565] Below this exalted strata of Kerala society come the *Ambalavasis* or temple attendants, of whom there exist roughly nine subdivisions. With them are to be classed the self-styled *Kshattriyas* and the *Samantans*, from whose ranks are drawn the flower of the former military aristocracy. The Malayalam maharajas and rajas all belong to this class, as does the family of the Zamorin of Calicut.

In immediate succession are the *Nayars*, Sudras by caste, descendants of those easterners whom Parasu Raman brought in for the protection

of the Brahmins. There are something like sixty four subdivisions of 105
these people, from those ranking highest, in north Malabar, to the non- 564
military, low caste ones of the south and of the Palghat taluk. Because of their very close relation to the Nambudri Brahmins which I shall describe below in detail, it can hardly be said that the Nayars are equal in caste to Sudras elsewhere in India. This is no doubt the reason for which, not only is their true position in the Hindu caste scale generally overlooked, but also why they themselves have a proud and self-assured bearing quite unlike that of the fourth and lowest caste in other parts of the country.

With the Nayars, the end of the list of caste Hindus is reached. Below come the *outcastes* who, despite their condition, are also graded in accordance with rank. First of these are the Tiyas. These bear different names in the various parts of Kerala, but there seems to be general agreement that they are really all one and the same people. Thus the name Tiya seems reserved for them in north Malabar with the exception perhaps of former north Cochin (Thiyyas); in Palghat, they are known as Iruvans, in south Malabar as Thandans and some as Irava-Panikkars; in south Cochin and north Travancore as Chovans, while in the rest of Travancore they go by the generic name of Iravas (sometimes spelt Izhuvas).

Next are the artisans or Kammalans of which there are properly only [463]
four main subdivisions. Their associates, also artisans and craftsmen, are roughly grouped into fourteen different communities.

The Kammalans are followed by another category composed of farm-
hands, the Cherumas and Pulayas, and a dozen or so different kinds of [563]
aboriginals, jungle and hill folk who are rarely encountered on the coast or in the cultivated area, and have to be sought for in the foothills and jungles of the Western Ghats.

Non-Hindu inhabitants of Kerala include Moslems and Christians, 105
of whom the greater number belong to the first of these two religious 563
communities. They are both known locally as Mappillas, the first as 795
Jonaka Mappillas and the others as Nasrani Mappillas. It is from this name, meaning "mother's son" or "bridegroom" or again "great child", that the more familiar *Mopla* for the Kerala Mohammedans has been coined. All are of the Sunni persuasion, while the Christians belong to a great number of varied denominations; some of them are Roman Catholic (the majority), others "Romo-Syrian" (Uniat), Orthodox Syrian, Malankara Syrian, Assyro-Chaldean (Nestorian), Mar Thomas, and of the Protestant United Church of south India.

105 There is a small community of Jews in Cochin, divided into White,
563 Brown, and Black, the last named being the most numerous. Other
[795] Kerala residents are foreigners such as Canarese, Tamils, Arabs, and
Europeans.

105 Untouchability has been made a penal offence by the present Indian
564 Constitution and there is undoubtedly a tendency among the more en-
783 lightened in the country to combat its evils and attempt to eradicate it
from modern Hindu society. On the other hand, the religious minded
(and there are many) maintain that since the Constitution is a secular
one and allows full freedom of religious belief and practice, the legisla-
tor cannot interfere in questions of caste and untouchability, as these
have to do with the religious law and structure of India. The fact is
that, today, untouchability is not what it was, but it cannot be said either
that it has been done away with altogether. A visitor to Kerala is cer-
tainly immediately made aware of this, as many traditional views on
what constitutes intercaste pollution and what does not are still very
much in evidence. Thus, although a member of the artisan caste, a
[784] Kammalan, perhaps no longer pollutes those above him in the hierarchy,
[264] atmospherically, at twenty four feet as he used to do, it is nevertheless
unthinkable that he should sit down to a meal of cooked rice with a
[463] Nambudri, or even for that matter with a Nayar. The aboriginal Nay-
adis who still live off begging and hunting may possibly "come into
[484] town" now and not have to keep off the roads for fear of polluting other
[784] castes merely by being seen within a distance of seventy four feet, but
they are not for that admitted to a would-be reformed Indian commun-
ity in which no distinctions of caste, creed and colour are made any
longer; in fact, they themselves, probably out of some sort of perverse
attachment to their powers of polluting, refuse to be rehabilitated – as
has been attempted by the former government of Travancore – and
prefer to carry on with their traditional way of life.

It can thus be safely said that pollution of the higher castes by the
lower is very much believed in and guarded against, even in Kerala
[841] today. Menstruating women, and also those who have given birth, are
[846] still considered to be unclean for a period, varying with the people to
whom they belong. And the various kin groups, of which every indiv-
[614] idual is a member among the Hindus of Kerala, will equally be con-
[846] sidered unclean and polluting for a certain amount of days – diminishing
[765] in number in inverse proportion to the height of the caste – after a birth
or a death has taken place.

000 Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected par-

Respect towards a superior, towards a god, towards a respected parent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not 105
wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. 564
Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always 576
praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya 291
factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some covering over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however, Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of 104
the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and 105
of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their 564
mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. 614
Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and 611
through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in 428
matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member, the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patrilineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as
illams or *kiriyams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in 613
principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, marriage 587
being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in 591
the case of patrilineal people.[1]

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. 611
They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and 613
patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden 582
days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his
caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons 105
were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devotees) 564
or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as 588
sambandham to which we shall revert in a moment. They were maintained 463
by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a 582
meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by 428

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[1] I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

105 the Nambudri Act of 1933, the provisions of which are that younger
564 Nambudris may marry women of their own caste and that the *illam*
581 property can be divided, if they so wish, and inherited by these younger
428 sons.

Others who observe *makkathayam* in Kerala are the south Malabar
105 and north Cochin Thandans, the Kammalans and their associated fellow
564 artisans and craftsmen, all the agrarian serfs and the aboriginals, the
611 south Malabar Moslem Moplas, the Christians and the Jews.

Marumakkathayam, on the other hand, is practised by Kshattriyas,
Samantans, Ambalavasis, Nayars, north Malabar Tiyas, south Travan-
core Iruvas and north Malabar as well as Laccadive Moplas. In the
case of the Mohammedans, a distinction should be made in matters of
[428] inheritance, family property (that is of the *tarawad*) being handed on
through the female line alone, while self-acquisitions of the father are
[092] passed on directly to his male heirs. A visit to the Makhdun Tangal of
[115] Ponani, the senior Islamic religious authority in Kerala, which I made
on the 24th of November, 1949, allowed me to confirm this. Originally
from the Hedjaz, Sayed Mohammed Ben Mustafa Haidaros told me that
this was an adaptation of Koranic law to the customs of the country and
had been introduced many years back with the coming of his ancestors
to the south-west coast of India.

Marriage in Kerala is an arranged affair, parents or a close relative
105 such as the maternal uncle, choosing a suitable partner for the child
564 after the age of puberty. Once the two families involved have agreed
[58] as to what shall be paid in bride price and in dowry, the wedding is
celebrated publicly with religious rites and with an appropriate display
of festive spending. This is the general rule insofar as marriage within
[588] the caste is concerned. Intercaste relations are, however, far from rare,
and their existence has been regularized and institutionalized in a form
of sexual union, mentioned above, and known as *sambandham*.

By this arrangement, which appears to conform to a general principle
105 of hypergamy in Kerala, men of a higher caste are permitted to consort
564 with women of a lower one, without incurring any of the obligations to-
588 wards wife and children which they would have if they had been regu-
larly wed. Greatly facilitating this is the fact that *sambandham* unions
[428] usually take place with women of those people who follow *marumakka-
thayam*, for in this way, the offspring which they may have will belong
to their caste and are cared for by and inherit from the maternal uncle.

Sambandham used to be the usual way in which younger Nambudri
sons enjoyed the privilege of taking Nayar women to themselves and

having children by them. The latter were born into the Nayar caste, 105
and to all practical purposes were untouchables for their fathers. But, 564
in fact, Nayars thus procreated were perfectly conscious of the high 588
caste blood which flowed in their veins and which made them only
slightly less important than their exalted sires. A feeling of close relation
to the Brahmins was thus definitely generated in them, giving them
the self-assurance and self-assertion in public affairs that distinguishes
them from their fellow Indians to this day. Others, and especially Arabs,
have also contracted *sambandham* unions with the Nayar women of
Malabar. Such unions are equally possible with *marumakkathayam*
Tiya women, and between members of the same endogamous caste,
when regular marriage is not possible.

Although it appears to be a very loose way of setting up a household 105
(there is no other ceremony than the possible offering of a piece of cloth 564
by the man to the woman, and the relation can be broken off informally 588
at any time), in actual fact there were, and still are, very few cases of 428
sambandham unions not lasting. The main drawback seems to have
been the feeling of frustration in the male partner that he was unable to
do anything for, or leave anything to, his children. British legislation [648]
attempted to remedy this state of affairs by the Malabar Marriage Act IV
of 1896 which provided for such unions to be registered and stipulated
that when they were, they would be looked upon as regular, legal marriages
entitling the "wife" and children to maintenance by the "husband"
and father, and to inheritance of half his self-acquired property
should he die intestate. Inheritance from father to son in matrilineal
families has since been further legalized by the Madras *Marumakkathayam*
Act of 1933, but its provisions really apply more specifically to
the regular marriages of the *marumakkathayam* practising people. In [614]
accordance with them, the property of the *tarawads* can now be divided
up between the members, if they so wish.

A specific custom of Kerala, which has never failed to intrigue outsiders, 105
is still very much observed today, namely the ceremony of *tali-kettu-kalyanam*, 588
or of the tying of the *tali*. The latter is a small piece
of gold, through which a thread has been strung, and which is tied
round the neck of a girl before she attains maturity. Speculation as to
what is the significance, origin and function of this ritual has been rife
over the years, but at least opinions do not seem to differ on the point
that it represents some form of symbolic marriage, preceding and perhaps
preparing the way for a real one, or for entry into a *sambandham*
union.

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588 Without going into the elaborate details of the occasion – which are very different, depending on the caste to which the girl belongs – it is enough to mention that its main item is the tying of the *tali* round the child's neck by someone who is, usually, a substitute bridegroom or *manavalan*. He should be of a higher or at least of the same caste, but he can also be an old, venerable person who has already done this, for instance, to the mother; sometimes the father takes the place of the *manavalan*, at others, it is the maternal uncle. That the mother herself should do so, is not unknown, and cases in which a clay figure has taken the place of a live person are on record. It has also become increasingly the custom to tie the *tali* on many girls at the same time (to save expense), and the tendency is to do the ceremony earlier and earlier in the children's lives.

After the man who ties the *tali* has fulfilled his task, he is not entitled to touch the girl. But shades of the times when he perhaps did do so still exist in the practice of his attempting to force the girl's bedchamber door, and of his being pelted by male onlookers belonging to her kin group, which does take place in some of the lower castes. In south Malabar, he is supposed to lie down under the same blanket with the girl for a few moments; among the Ambalavasis, and in some of the sub-castes, he may even spend three nights with her, but under the strict supervision of a chaperon put there to see that he does not touch her. In some cases, a form of divorce ends the ceremony before the *manavalan* is allowed to go. *Tali* tying is universal in Kerala, where it is not
[184] limited to the Hindus only, but is also practised by the Moslem Moplas and the Christians.

105 It is interesting to note that the Portuguese traveller of the beginning
582 of the sixteenth century, Duarte Barbosa, mentions that before a Nayar
588 girl can be married, afer the *tali* has been tied on her, she should be
833 deflowered before puberty, by some young man called in specially to do
this from outside the caste, "for amongst themselves they hold it an
[183] unclean thing and almost a disgrace to deflower women" (*The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, p. 124).

4. LAND-TENURE

105
241 Kerala is an agricultural state and everyone in it is either dependant on the produce of the land or linked to it by serving those who till the soil. The main crops are rice, coconuts, pepper and arecanuts, in that order of importance. Others, less important, are pulses, tapioca, spices such

as ginger and chillies, palm sugar, mangoes and bananas, betel leaf, tea 105
and coffee. There are two main paddy (unhusked rice) harvests, the 241
kanni in September and until November, depending on the type of rice
planted and where, and the *magaram* in January and February.

A system of land-tenure and tenancy very special to Kerala is in ex- 105
istence in the state and its principal characteristics may be summed up 427
as follows. Freehold land owners are called *janmis* and they are entitled [423]
to the absolute proprietorship of the land; they may mortgage or lease
it to anyone as they wish. They are themselves nearly always non- [104]
cultivating. The first kind of tenure to which they may resort is called
kanam and he who holds the lease is known as the *kanamdar*. This is a
curious type of arrangement between landlord and tenant, by which the
latter deposits a certain sum with the *janmi*, who in return pays interest
on the amount as if it were a loan. The *kanamdar* then has the right to
work the land or to lease it out to someone else. Every year he pays
rent, an adjusted sum as the interest received from the landlord is deducted. Once every twelve years, a so-called renewal fee is paid by the
tenant equal to three times the annual rent, and this gives him the right
of possession for a further twelve years. Should he wish to give up the
lease, the original deposit will be returned to him by the *janmi*. Most
kanamdars sub-let and do not cultivate the land themselves.

The *kanamdars* often lease out the land as a *kanam* tenure too; but [104]
if they do not, it is as a *verumpattam* lease that they do so. This is a
simple affair held for one year at a time, by which the tenant pays a
fixed rent, or for several years, in which case it is called a customary
verumpattam, and a renewal fee then becomes necessary, payable between five and twelve years. This lease is used only for paddy fields. [243]
Tenants of this category often sub-lease in the same way to others, who
cultivate the land either themselves, or, more usually, employ labourers [466]
to do so. These labourers are of two kinds, free and tied. The former [464]
are coolies hiring themselves out for wages, while the others are agrarian farmhands who receive only board, lodging and clothing from the
master responsible for them.

Customary *verumpattam* tenure of palm gardens for the production [104]
of coconuts or arecanuts is called *kuzhikanam*. The twelve year renewal
fee is equal to the amount made on the garden in the last year and a
half of the lease. Virgin and waste land, which nevertheless always has
a *janmi* somewhere, is also let out on this type of tenure. The land
owner has the right to evict the tenant if he has made no improvement
of the land during his period of lease. House-sites occupied by tenants

105 427 also have to be paid for, if they do not wish to be summarily evicted by a land owner who simply tolerates their settling down on his land. This is an ordinary lease, like a *verumpattam*, but is called a *kudiyiruppu*.

Tenants were formerly at a great disadvantage vis a vis the *janmi*, as the latter was at liberty to evict them on the slightest pretext. The Malabar Tenancy Act of 1930, by protecting the tenant, and restricting the cases in which eviction is possible (such as the non-payment of rent for instance, or necessity for the land owner to have some land to cultivate himself), especially of the *kanamdar*, has made this a thing of the
[423] past. Dissatisfaction with the existing conditions of land ownership and land-tenure continues, however, and the present tendency goes so far as
[864] to want to protect the interests of the *verumpattam* tenants to the detriment of the *kanamdars* and *janmis* and even, in the last resort as we shall see, of the landless, agrarian labourers who constitute the vast army of the Kerala agrarian proletariat.

105 423 564 It is difficult to generalize about the distribution of agricultural roles and interests among the various castes and communities in the state. Schematically, it can be said, however, that generally Nambudri Brahmins are *janmis*, since, as mythology has it, Parasu Raman gave them the land in perpetual enjoyment. Commenting on this, one of my interpreters assured me that this was not mere idle belief. It was a fact, giving the Brahmins an unequivocal title to the land, in spite of there being "no legal document" confirming them in their ownership. Many Nayars, including Kshattriyas such as the rajas of Cochin and Travancore, Samantans such as the Zamorin, and some Tiyas and Moplas, are also owners of large tracts of land.

105 564 [427] [273] [963] [864] *Kanamdars* are usually recruited among the well-to-do Nayars and Tiyas, but also among the big Mopla families. Other Moslems are *verumpattam* tenants, as are the majority of the Tiyas. These of course used to follow their traditional profession of *toddy* (fermented palm juice) tapping, but with the introduction of prohibition in the former Madras State, they have had to give it up, and mainly hire themselves out as labourers. Others who have always hired themselves out in this way, as an immemorial caste occupation, are the Cherumas and Pulayas, some free, but the vast majority tied to the land. Many Moplas, also, have no other means of subsistance.

105 563 463 754 The aboriginals in Kerala continue their wild life of beggars, food-gatherers or primitive forest-clearers and agriculturalists. Some are addicted to witchcraft as are also members of some of the artisan castes, and their activities give Kerala a strange, mysterious atmosphere of imponderable evil, the reputation of which is great outside its boundaries.

ponderable evil, the reputation of which is great outside its boundaries. 600

5. POLYANDRY IN KERALA

595 564 463 During my stay in Kerala, I found that the following castes practise polyandry in the state: Nayars, Thandans, and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north Cochin, Kammalans such as Tathans (goldsmiths), Karuwans, or Perinkollam (blacksmiths), Asaris (carpenters) and Puri-asaris (laterite-cutters), Musaris (bell-metal smiths of braziers); also the allied castes to these of Kolla-kurups (shampooers, masseurs, and leather-shield makers) and Vil-kurups(bow-makers), Tol-kollans (leather workers), Kanisans (astrologers), Mannans (washermen and barbers), Panans (exorcists and umbrella-makers), Pulluvans (herbalists and *nag* worship songsters). All follow *makkathayam* except the Nayars, who are *marumakkathayam* from one end of Kerala to the other. [611]

595 177 [701] Today, Nayars in Kerala are said, as we have seen (p. 92), to have ceased the practice of polyandry. Not only do they say so themselves, but other castes are emphatic on this point as well. Since, with the disappearance of the petty chieftains, Nayar militias no longer exist, the customs that were closely linked to these organizations have also faded away. The Mysore invasions perhaps had something to do with it, too, for Tipu Sultan was grimly determined to eradicate the Nayar armies [175] and made this his principal objective. In 1788, before invading Malabar, in a proclamation which was intended, among other things, to be a warning to the people, he said: "... and since it is the practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and you leave your mothers and sisters unconstrained in their obscene practices, and are thence all born in adultery; and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts in the fields: I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and to be like the rest of mankind; and if you are disobedient to these commands, I have made repeated vows to honour the whole of you with Islam." (quoted by C. A. Innes, I.C.S. in *Malabar and Anjengo*, Madras District Gazeteers, p. 72). Many of the Moplas today, especially inland, are descendants of Nayars whom Tipu thus did "honour with Islam". [797] They were forcibly circumcized and regaled with beef. Many, however, [524] reconverted themselves later, but lost caste in the process and were never considered the same again.

595 In spite of it being said that Nayars are no longer polyandrous in Kerala, I was able to find, as I shall show further on, some families left

595 who do still live matrimonially in this way. From a certain Musad (low-caste Nambudri Brahmin practising surgery) whom I met in Shoranur 115 and who was introduced to me as someone well informed because, 759 owing to his profession, he had access where others could not go, I heard that in the very closed Court circles of Cochin and Travancore polyandry of the old type is still practised by Nayar ladies, who consort with wealthy Tamil Brahmins and Pillais from the east coast. It would naturally have been far beyond the bounds of possibility for me personally to investigate the truthfulness of this allegation, and therefore it can only be given here for what it is worth.

Thandans and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of north Cochin practise polyandry of the fraternal type, and none other. They are *makkathayam*, and a regular wedding ceremony is usual in their case. Cross-cousin marriage, in 582 which a woman marries her father's sister's son, her *machchunan* and all his brothers, is preferred if not compulsory. The ceremony is per-585 formed at the bride's house, after the preliminary exchange of bride-595 price and dowry have taken place between the two families involved, and consists of the girl and her bridegrooms being seated in a row and fed ritually on *kanji* (rice porridge) and coconut milk. The honeymoon of the newly wed also takes place at the home of the wife, her husbands going to her either each in turn or in a body. Later residence of the 591 family is patrilocal.

Most Thandans and Tiyas of central Kerala used to be toddy tappers, 173 as I have mentioned earlier (p. 172). This occupation, they say, they 463 brought from Ceylon, from where they are reputed to have originated; 595 they also profess to have brought from there the coconut palm tree and the practice of fraternal polyandry. The tradition is closely linked to that of the Kammalans whom I shall describe next, and there does seem to be some evidence of close ties with the great island to the south. To 167 this day, many Thandans and Tiyas emigrate temporarily to Ceylon as labourers, and it is said, although the etymology may be fanciful as some authors insist, that Tiya is derived from *dvipa*, "island" in Sanskrit.

595 I found Thandan and Tiya polyandry quite active still in Walluvanad and in north Cochin. I had been led to believe that it was fast dying 178 out and that only very few practised it any longer. But this was not my impression, especially in the taluk of south Malabar. In north Cochin, 656 a recent enactment known as Act XVII of 1115 The Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act of 1940, had made polyandry illegal in future, and it is true that nine years after the coming into existence of the new legislation, only the older people still practised the ancient form of marriage.

The polyandry of the Kammalans, of the four sub-castes of 595
goldsmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters and bell-metal smiths, is in every way 173
identical with that of the Thandans and Tiyas of the central area. This [564]
may be because they claim a common Sinhalese origin for it. The legend [326]
relates that one of the early Perumal kings of Kerala, having received some useful hints as to how to have his washing done by a *dhobi* (washerman) promised to give him a girl of the Asari (carpenter) caste in marriage. This revolted the Kammalans, and in order to avoid the degrading proposition, they emigrated in a body to Ceylon, leaving their king with none but a few workmen specialized in making roofs for the temples. The pre-historic boycott had its desired effect. The Perumal monarch, in dire distress, promised to give up the marriage he had had in mind and appealed to the king of Ceylon for the return of his indispensable artisans. These agreed to come back, but were given protection by the king of Sinhala in the form of an escort of his own subjects who brought the coconut with them, settled in Kerala and became the ancestors of the Tiyas. Presumably, the Kammalans learned the advantages of polyandry when they were in the kingdom of Kandy, and have never ceased to practise it since.

I found all the artisan families which I visited polyandrous, and I was 595
told that the custom is still very vigorous, in spite of what outsiders have 564
to say. The same applies to those associated craftsmen castes, the Kolla- and Vil-Kurups, the Tol-kollan, Kanisans, Mannans, Panans and Pulluvans, who do not seem either to have given up polyandry in any great numbers. Their form of the institution differs in no way from that of their fellows of the senior caste.

B. POLYANDRY IN THE WALLUVANAD TALUK OF SOUTH MALABAR AND IN NORTH COCHIN

Personal Observations

It was into this complex maze of Kerala society that I ventured, a few 595*
years ago now, to study the polyandry of some of its people. In the following pages, I give the results of this personal investigation. Thanks to my helpers and interpreters, I was able to find polyandrous households almost immediately. My first visit to the Palghat taluk and to Walluvanad allowed me to confirm that the Tiyas still practised what I was searching for, and that what I had heard about them was not incorrect. While in Tellicherry, I had the same experience, even though

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayars

*595 I was in that town for only a very short time. I shall begin by giving a description of the little remaining Nayar polyandry that I was able to find.

114 *595 Research, in this case, was the very opposite of easy. When I was in Ottappalam of the Walluvanad taluk in 1949, and had made that town the centre of my activities, all the influential local Nayars, most of them *wakils* or lawyers, got together and, threatening the severest punishments if anyone disobeyed them, decided that none of their caste would give me any information at all regarding their alleged polyandry. The town is one from which many of the most prominent Nayars in Government service in New Delhi today have originally come, and in which members of their *tarawads* and immediate families still live. It is therefore understandable that they should have taken this line, it being considered by them today that any hint of their being polyandrous is insulting and degrading. Later, I heard that I had been accused in the Indian capital of stating that Nayars were descendants of the most primitive aboriginals. There was, naturally, absolutely no truth in this, but it is easy to see how the rumour originated.

*595 [351] On the 28th of August, 1939, I went to a Nayar household which I have marked down in my notes as bearing the name of Tsingepuram Kailott. It was in the outskirts of Tellicherry, a large house in a garden compound, with a smaller building some distance away from it. There I met a man called Apunayar and his brother Kamarnayar, and the latter who seemed to be the most talkative, told me through my interpreter that he was the youngest of the two, while his brother, the other man, was the eldest of the whole family. There were four brothers, he explained, the two other ones, junior to this pair, lived in the smaller house in the compound: their names were Kunjiramanayar and Narayannayar. Their mother, Amalu of Tsingepuram kailott *tarawad* had recently died. She had been polyandrous, and the four brothers and a daughter who was also dead now had been born and brought up in the big house by their maternal uncles. The latter had died before their [428] mother, and they had inherited the property. They had given up polyandry and now lived each of them with a wife. Households had been split, and the younger brothers had built themselves the smaller house in the garden, and lived there with their respective wives, while the two elder men had remained in the ancestral mansion. Apunayar had four children, two boys and two girls, Karanayar one girl, while in the smaller household, there were only a little boy and a little girl, both the children of Narayannayar.

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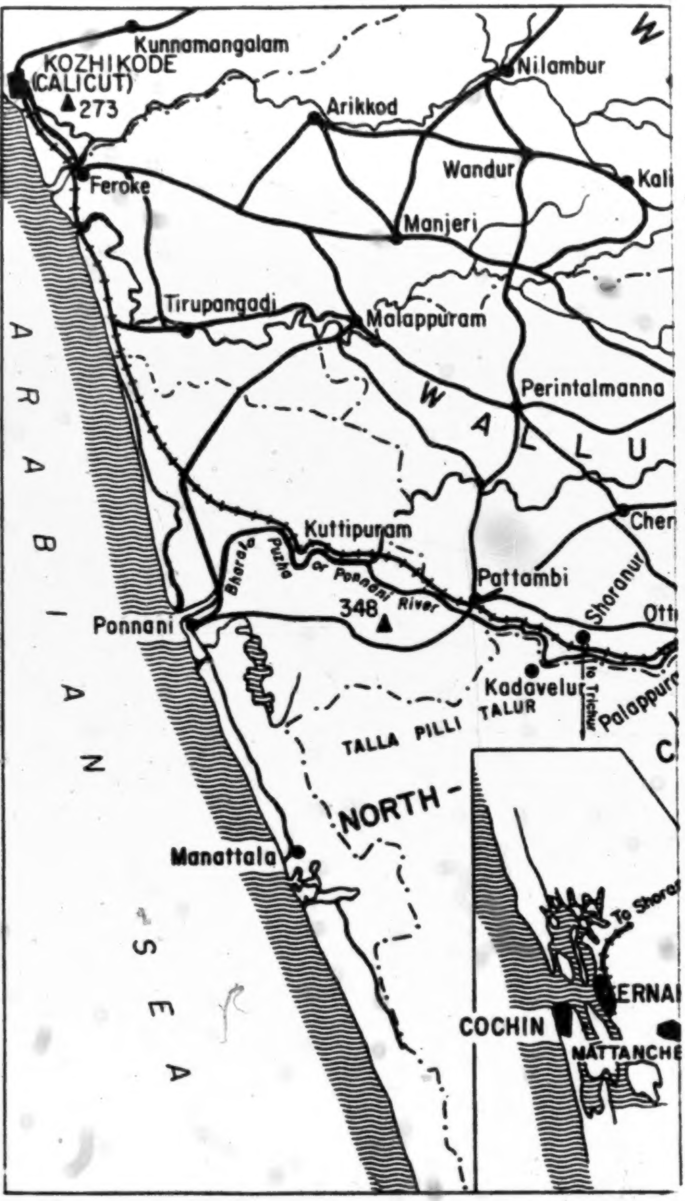
W
Kunnamangalam
KOZHIKODE
(CALICUT)
273
Nilambur
Arikkod
Wandur
Kali
Feroke
Manjeri
Tirupangadi
Malappuram
A R A B I A N S E A
W A L L U
Perintalmanna
Kuttipuram
Chen
Bharata Puzha or Ponnani River
Pattambi
Shoranur
348
Ponnani
Ott
Kadavelur
To Trichur
Palappur
TALLA PILLI TALUR
C
NORTH -
Manattala
To Shora
ERNA
COCHIN
MATTANCHE

Map II. Map of South Malabar and North Cochin in Kerala.

[facing P. 176-A]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

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103
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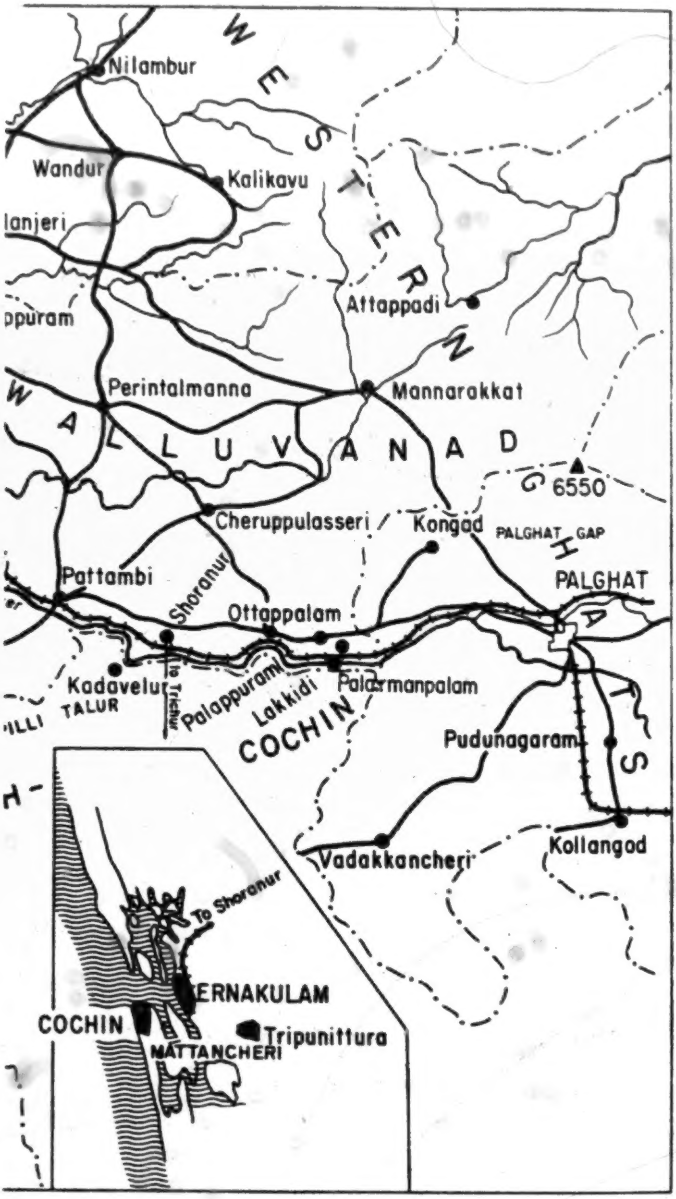

W E S T E R N
G H A T S
W A L L U V A N A D
Nilambur
Wandur
Kalikavu
lanjeri
ppuram
Attappadi
Perintalmanna
Mannarakkat
6550
Cheruppulasseri
Kongad
PALGHAT GAP
PALGHAT
Pattambi
Shoranur
Ottappalam
Kadavelur
TALUR
ILLI
To Trichur
Palappuram
Lakkidi
Palarmanpalam
COCHIN
Pudunagaram
Vadakkancheri
Kollangod
H -
To Shoranur
ERNAKULAM
COCHIN
Tripunittura
MATTANCHERI
0
15
30 miles

in in Kerala.

[facing P. 176-B]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Nayars

I would have liked to have returned to this household and to have got 595* more information about its inmates; I would also have found it useful to discover other Nayar homes in which the traces of polyandry were still as fresh as in this one. Alas, war broke out within a few days and I was inexorably drawn away as related in Appendix I.

I had to wait more than ten years before I again visited a Nayar household reputed to be polyandrous. It was in Palappuram, in the Walluvanad taluk, on the 23rd of November 1949, where I went to a house called Valathandath. Its inhabitants belonged to the Sudra Nayar sub-caste, and the *karanavan* whom I met, an old man, bore the name of Shekaranayar. His sister, Chimdevi, also aged, lived with him, she sat in a corner of one of the rooms, her breasts bare in the old fashioned way. She had been polyandrous too, I heard, although I was unable to discover the number and names of the husbands that she had had. Offspring consisted of two daughters and a son, the three of them living in the family house.

The eldest daughter, called Parbhatiama, had a little girl, Shandakumari. When I asked who the father was, she smiled and said that she did not know. Immediately intrigued, I asked again and why. The answer, which was not too difficult to obtain, was that she had two husbands, one "with the military" in Madras, and the other a Nayar agriculturist. Which of the two was the father, my interpreters said they could not find out for nobody knew. I was struck by the fact that this Nayar woman had a soldier as one of her husbands; it was reminiscent of the ancient classical pattern in which polyandry in her caste was reputed to exist because of the military commitments of the men.

The younger daughter, Kunyimaluama, posed for a photograph with [837] her brother, Krishnayar (Fig. 8); she was also accompanied by a young man called Balanayar of the Velathadeth *tarawad*, who was, I heard, her paramour but not her husband.

In view of the really determined opposition of the Nayar community 595* in Kerala towards allowing me to find out more about their marital cus- 114 toms, I abstained from making further enquiries into the subject. Consequently I was forced to content myself with the meagre results obtained, and, apart from the information gathered from the Musad and mentioned above (see p. 174), I steered clear of the Nayars. To have acted otherwise under the circumstances might well have compromised my entire research work in Kerala and have led, I am afraid, to my having to abandon it without gaining any further data, even concerning the other polyandrous castes and sub-castes.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Tiyas
thandans

*595 [114] With the Thandans and the Tiyas (Tiyyas) of north Cochin, there were happily none of these difficulties, and I was able to study them at my ease. On the 23rd of July, 1939, I paid my first visit to Kerala when I drove to Palghat from Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and went to a Tiya house in Lakkidi in Walluvanad with an interpreter. The Tiyas we met that day were two men, brothers, who shared a wife. When we entered the yard of their broken-down palm leaf house, she was sitting bare-breasted, suckling a little boy whom she told us was hers. The [611] two men, whose names I did not ascertain, told us that they followed *marumakkathayam*, which was surprising. In those days, I knew too little about Kerala to ask them if they came from north Malabar, as they probably did. But I have since heard from a blacksmith family which I visited at the same place on the 12th of November 1949, that they had indeed come from north Malabar, and that this was the reason why they were matrilineal. Their polyandry, on the other hand, was correlated with the economic plight in which they found themselves, and they had taken to it because it was the customary way to solve such difficulties with their fellows of the same caste in the south. They had no property and told us that they worked as paid labourers. For the house, they [427] paid four annas a year to a local Brahmin landlord. They said, nevertheless, that polyandry was dying out and that the Nayars, for instance, did not practise it any longer. Theirs was obviously a sporadic instance of a matrilineal Tiya family from north Malabar in which the wife was being shared by two brothers in a south Malabar taluk, where fraternal polyandry prevails. It would be unwise to make any generalizations from this as it was, I think, quite an exceptional and probably isolated case.

On the 25th and 26th of October 1949, together with my interpreters, I visited a large Thandan household, about two miles east of Ottappalam. The family living there were called Appayl Watakkeh, and they [351] belonged to the Appayl *tarawad*. The buildings in the compound consisted of one large mansion with a courtyard in front, at the end of which was a smaller house. Cattle and some dogs roamed about in the courtyard, where paddy was also drying. In the background, the green [342] plantain, papaya and areca nut palms, contrasted sharply with the red soil and the laterite stones from which the houses were built, and the soaring trunks of tall coconut trees stood out, here and there.

*595 115 We met the *karanavan*, called Raman, a man of forty eight, wearing only a piece of cotton from the waist down. He was wrinkled and partly bald, but very amiable and helpful when it came to questioning him. [551] On the first day, we spoke in general terms to him about the Thandan

Thandans

community. It was confirmed that this name, meaning "headman", is 595*
really a title (like so many others in Kerala – Nayar, Panikkar, Kurup, [551]
Menon, etc.) by which the Tiyas of south Malabar are known. He also [115]
answered questions about *tarawad* and *kiriyam*, marriage rites and cross-cousin preference, the prevalence of polyandry in the community and [124]
the changing times, points which have all been accounted for in the first part of this chapter.

On the second day, I made out the family's genealogy, which is given 595*
in the accompanying Table 3. A few words of comment are no doubt 601
needed here. I had three informants in all, since two others were added, later, to the first. I have marked them as Nos. 1, 2, and 3. The generation to which the first informant belonged had originally consisted of nine children, from Kunji, the eldest, to Narayana, the youngest. Their [614]
tarawad was patrilineal and exogamous, as was also their matrilineal *kiriyam* in principle, but the rules of the latter were not observed very much any more beyond their immediate acquaintances. Kunji, now sixty two, was married at twenty; Kali, married when she was sixteen, divorced a year later and lived with her brothers; she was now sixty. All five brothers, when they were young, had been married polyandrously to Devaki, the eldest, Mayadi, now deceased, being sixteen at the time. Nani and Raman were issued from that marriage, and the young Raman and his family lived here, with his elder namesake in the same house. Devaki died when she was twenty nine, and the brothers were then all remarried, again polyandrously by their parents, to Kuniyama. Mayadi, then aged thirty, died the following year, and Raman senior became the *karanavan*.

Sankara then suddenly said that he was displeased with the common wife. He expressed a desire to break away, and asked his father and maternal uncle to find him another wife. There was considerable opposition to begin with, but, eventually, they gave in, and Kodamah was found for Sankara, who, however, did not move out and put up another household, but stayed in the family mansion with Raman. The latter retained Kuniyama as his wife and had four children by her – Krishna, Janeki, Kerthiyani, and Madivi. Sankara and Kodamah, now forty five and thirty five respectively, had one daughter, Devaki, whom they married off three years ago when she was sixteen.

The breaking away of their elder brother, Sankara, seems to have given Panju and Narayana ideas of liberty as well. Kuniyama was apparently not a very popular common spouse, or else Raman monopolized her too much – it was difficult to find out which, for all that I

Thandans
Tiyas

* 595 601 could get Panju to say at first was that she "did not look after us enough". However, when I insisted, I heard that she did not satisfy them sexually, which again might be either that Ramon got the lion's share of the marriage or that the two younger men did not find their elder brother's wife very attractive. Anyhow, they asked their maternal uncle (their father had died in the meantime) to find them another wife. After a show of resistance in which he said that it was not right and that they should remain with Kuniyama as tradition dictated, their mother's brother again gave in and got Nani for them; they married her when they were twenty and fifteen respectively. They were now forty and thirty five, and their common wife was thirty five. They had put up a separate household, to leave Raman and Sankara in the main building, and theirs was the smaller house on the other side of the yard, wholly within the same compound, however, so that the *tarawad* property was not completely torn asunder.

428 The land upon which the family lived was theirs, and not rented. After the death of their father, their mother inherited it, and when she died, it was divided up between the sons. Mayadi was also gone, but Raman junior, his son, and the four surviving brothers, Raman senior, Sankara, Panju and Narayana, each received one fifth of the whole. There was a meeting in the big house, they told me, about a year after the death of their mother (they presumably inherited the property undivided until then), and it took them three days to come to an agreement. Influential neighbours, the elders of the *tarawad* and the two brothers-in-law, Kunyadi and Maniken, also attended. The whole property, paddy fields, cattle, grain and seeds, agricultural tools, implements, the house and the household requisites and furniture, was evaluated in money and divided into five equal shares. *[595] Panju and Narayana did not split their shares; they kept the two fifths they received undivided, as they constituted a polyandrous household. The women did not inherit anything because they had been married off to others. Women among the Thandans can inherit from their parents, I heard, if there are no male heirs.

*595 [427] On the 27th of October 1949, I visited a Tiya (Thiyya) polyandrous family at Kadevelur in Tallapilli taluk of north Cochin. These people were *kanam* tenants of a Nambudri Brahmin, to whom they paid thirty rupees a year in rent, plus eight hundred measures of rice per crop.[1]

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[804] [1] I was told eight hundred *parahs*, but this is hardly possible as: 1 Cochin *parah* = 10 *edangallis* = 40 *nallis* = 1,720 *tolas*; as 42½ Cochin *tolas* = 1 lb., 1 Cochin *parah* = c. 40½ lbs. Eight hundred *parahs* would then = 40½ × 800 = 32,400 lbs. The measure may have been a smaller one, an *edangalli* or even a *nalli*.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 A W11 Kerala A W11
Thandans

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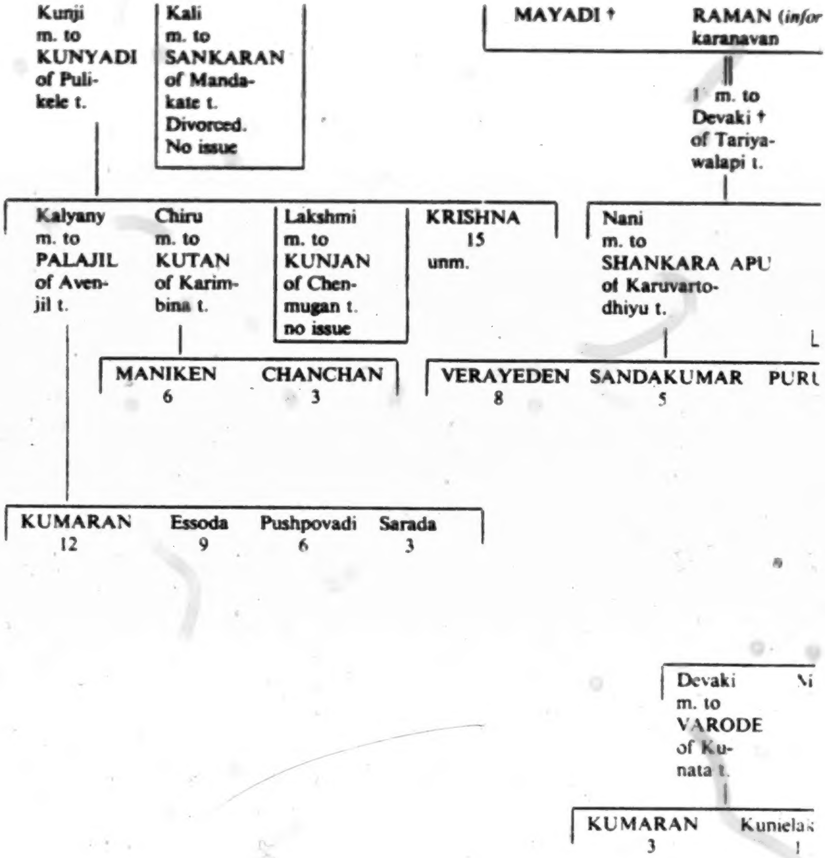
TABLE 3. GENEALOGY OF APPAYL *Tarawad.* APPAYL WATTAKKEH I


Kunji m. to KUNYADI of Pulikele t.
Kali m. to SANKARAN of Mandakate t. Divorced. No issue
MAYADI †
RAMAN (*infor* karanavan
1 m. to Devaki † of Tariyawalapi t.
Kalyany m. to PALAJIL of Avenjil t.
Chiru m. to KUTAN of Karimbina t.
Lakshmi m. to KUNJAN of Chenmugan t. no issue
KRISHNA 15 unm.
Nani m. to SHANKARA APU of Karuvartodhiyu t.
MANIKEN 6
CHANCHAN 3
VERAYEDEN 8
SANDAKUMAR 5
PURU
KUMARAN 12
Essoda 9
Pushpovadi 6
Sarada 3
Devaki m. to VARODE of Kunata t.
Ni
KUMARAN 3
Kunielak 1

---

[1] Sankara and his family live in the same house as Raman.

[2] Panju and Narayana with their common wife live in a smaller house in the same compoun.

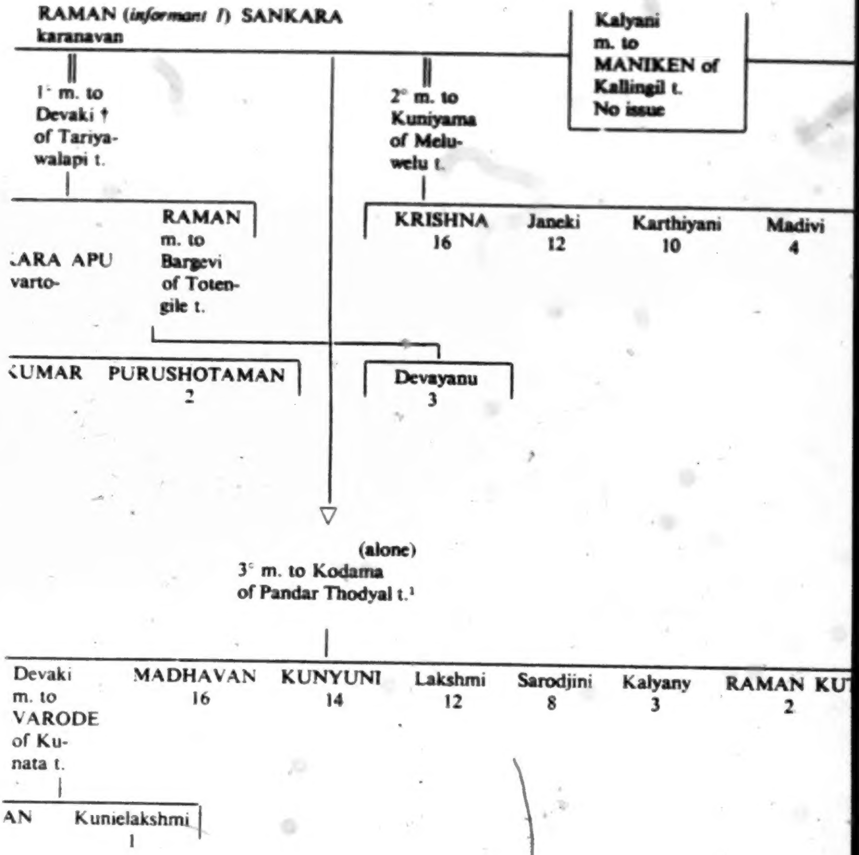
Capital letters denote males
Small characters are women
† = dead
m. = married
t. = *tarawad*
The age of small children or unmarried ones is shown below their names.

[facing P. 180-A]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Thandans

*595
601

ATTAKKEH HOUSEHOLD.

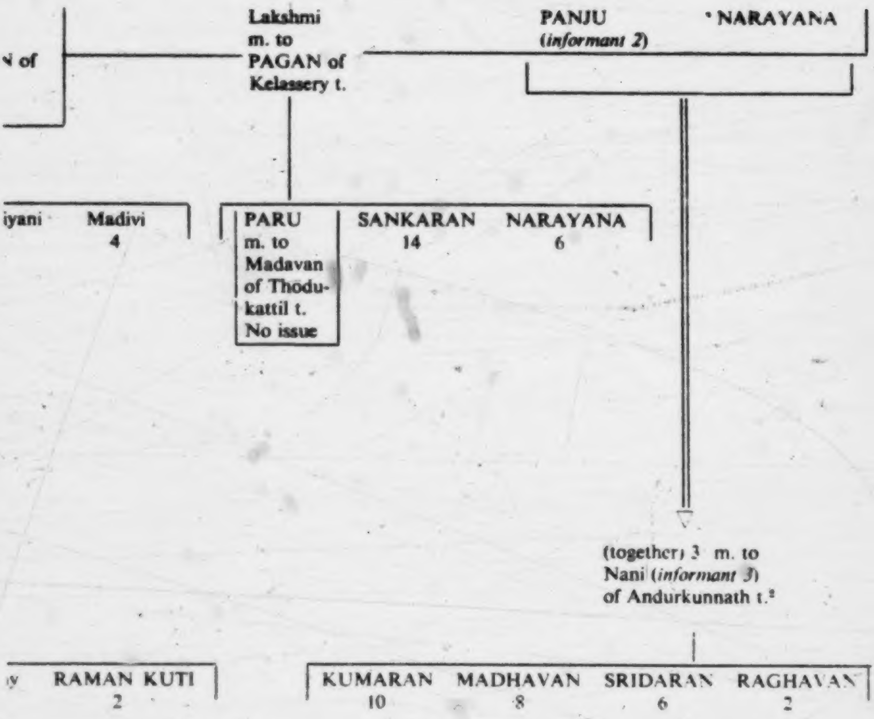

RAMAN (informant I) SANKARA
karanavan
1° m. to
Devaki †
of Tariya-
walapi t.
2° m. to
Kuniyama
of Melu-
welu t.
Kalyani
m. to
MANIKEN of
Kallingil t.
No issue
RAMAN
m. to
Bargevi
of Toten-
gile t.
ARA APU
varto-
KRISHNA
16
Janeki
12
Karthiyani
10
Madivi
4
UMAR
PURUSHOTAMAN
2
Devayanu
3
(alone)
3° m. to Kodama
of Pandar Thodyal t.[1]
Devaki
m. to
VARODE
of Ku-
nata t.
MADHAVAN
16
KUNYUNI
14
Lakshmi
12
Sarodjini
8
Kalyany
3
RAMAN KU
2
AN
Kunielakshmi
1

: same compound.

[facing p. 180-B]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Thandans

*595
601


N of
Lakshmi
m. to
PAGAN of
Kelassery t.
PANJU
(informant 2)
NARAYANA
iyani
Madivi
4
PARU
m. to
Madavan
of Thodu-
kattil t.
No issue
SANKARAN
14
NARAYANA
6
(together) 3 m. to
Nani (informant 3)
of Andurkunnath t.[2]
y
RAMAN KUTI
2
KUMARAN
10
MADHAVAN
8
SRIDARAN
6
RAGHAVAN
2

[facing p. 180-C]

The informant, Velu, with whom we spoke, kept us outside the house 595* on some chairs in the drive leading up to the property. He did not seem [123] inclined to let us come in.

I made the accompanying genealogy with Velu. It is rather an ex- 595* tensive one since the family was large, and therefore I have laid it out 601 in two Tables (4 & 5), separating the two lots of polyandrous families in which the older generation was divided. As regards the name, the informant told me that the *tarawad* contained five households, of which this was one; they had appellations principally of the four cardinal points, the name of his household meaning "eastern".

Velu and his two younger brothers were married polyandrously to Kalyany, who had become their wife after her elder sister, Amalu, had died. This appeared to be somewhat reminiscent of sororate, but I understand that it was not so, the brothers simply having taken their sister-in-law in marriage because they liked her and thought it a good idea. The two elder brothers who were now dead, Pangan and Karapan, had also been married polyandrously to Mogami, who was still alive; she was sixty five at the time of my research work. They had had her all to themselves, because the three younger men had not wanted her. although for what reason it was impossible to make Velu say. All that he would impart to us was that they did not want her, and brought in Amalu as their wife, and kept her in the same house with the others. Even today, he said, they all lived together, without the property having been divided up between them.

Mogami had had eighteen children of whom thirteen were still alive. 595* I had an opportunity to meet this remarkable woman some weeks later, and I found her a lively and intelligent person, who did not appear to be the slightest bit worn out by her two husbands and many children. She was thin and rather small with flashing eyes and a very sharp brain. She told me many anecdotes of her former married life, with great relish and obvious pleasure, as if she had been extremely happy in it. She was quite unashamedly proud of her achievements and her present widowed life was kept interesting by the memories for which she lived.

Two of her eldest daughters, Lakshmi and Kuniyukuti, had been mar- [464] ried polyandrously, and still lived under that arrangement, although [167] Chankuni, the elder husband of Kuniyukuti, was rarely at home; he was employed as a peon in Ceylon, and only paid brief visits to Kerala. This brought the total number of polyandrous families in the Kereghetil household to four.

It should be noted, however, that only the men and their families as [591]

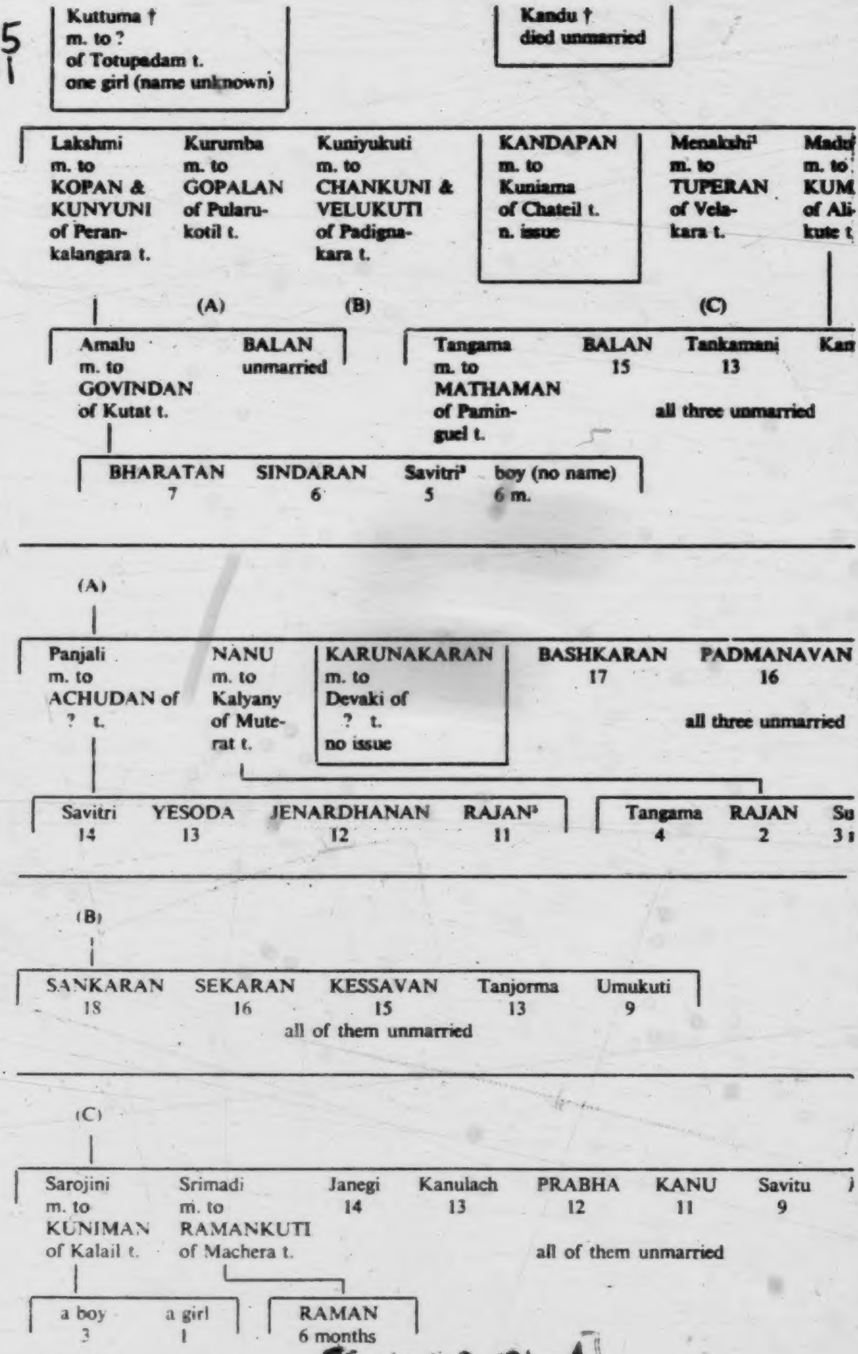
[Text continues on p. 183]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Tiyas

TABLE 4. GENEALOGY OF KUTUKULANGARA *Tarawad*, KEREGHETIL E

*595
601



Kuttuma †
m. to ?
of Totupadam t.
one girl (name unknown)
Kandu †
died unmarried
Lakshmi
m. to
KOPAN &
KUNYUNI
of Perankalangara t.
Kurumba
m. to
GOPALAN
of Pularukotil t.
Kuniyukuti
m. to
CHANKUNI &
VELUKUTI
of Padignakara t.
KANDAPAN
m. to
Kuniama
of Chateil t.
n. issue
Menakshi[1]
m. to
TUPERAN
of Velakara t.
Madu
m. to
KUM
of Ali-
kute t
(A)
(B)
(C)
Amalu
m. to
GOVINDAN
of Kutat t.
BALAN
unmarried
Tangama
m. to
MATHAMAN
of Paminguel t.
BALAN
15
Tankamani
13
Kan
all three unmarried
BHARATAN
7
SINDARAN
6
Savitri[3]
5
boy (no name)
6 m.
(A)
Panjali
m. to
ACHUDAN of
? t.
NANU
m. to
Kalyany
of Muterat t.
KARUNAKARAN
m. to
Devaki of
? t.
no issue
BASHKARAN
17
PADMANAVAN
16
all three unmarried
Savitri
14
YESODA
13
JENARDHANAN
12
RAJAN[3]
11
Tangama
4
RAJAN
2
Su
3
(B)
SANKARAN
18
SEKARAN
16
KESSAVAN
15
Tanjorma
13
Umukuti
9
all of them unmarried
(C)
Sarojini
m. to
KUNIMAN
of Kalail t.
Srimadi
m. to
RAMANKUTI
of Machera t.
Janegi
14
Kanulach
13
PRABHA
12
KANU
11
Savitu
9
all of them unmarried
a boy
3
a girl
1
RAMAN
6 months

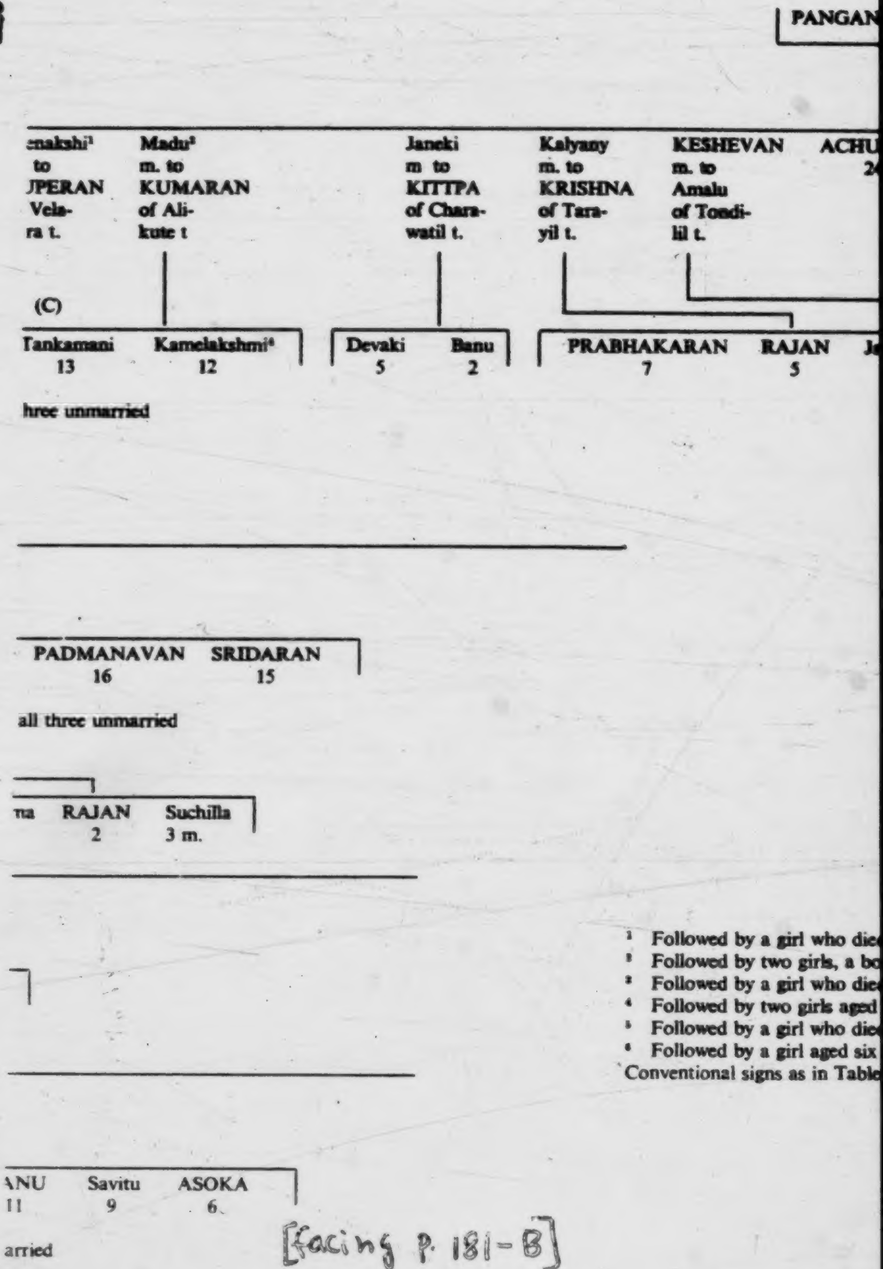
[facing p 181-A]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Tiyas

EREGHETIL HOUSEHOLD. PART 1.

*595
601



PANGAN
enakshi[1] to JPERAN Vela-ra t.
Madu[2] m. to KUMARAN of Ali-kute t
Janeki m to KITTPA of Chara-watil t.
Kalyany m. to KRISHNA of Tara-yil t.
KESHEVAN m. to Amalu of Tondi-lil t.
ACHU 2
(C)
Tankamani 13
Kamelakshmi[4] 12
Devaki 5
Banu 2
PRABHAKARAN 7
RAJAN 5
J
hree unmarried
PADMANAVAN 16
SRIDARAN 15
all three unmarried
na
RAJAN 2
Suchilla 3 m.
ANU 11
Savitu 9
ASOKA 6
arried

[facing p. 181-B]

---

[1] Followed by a girl who die

[2] Followed by two girls, a bo

[3] Followed by a girl who die

[4] Followed by two girls aged

[5] Followed by a girl who die

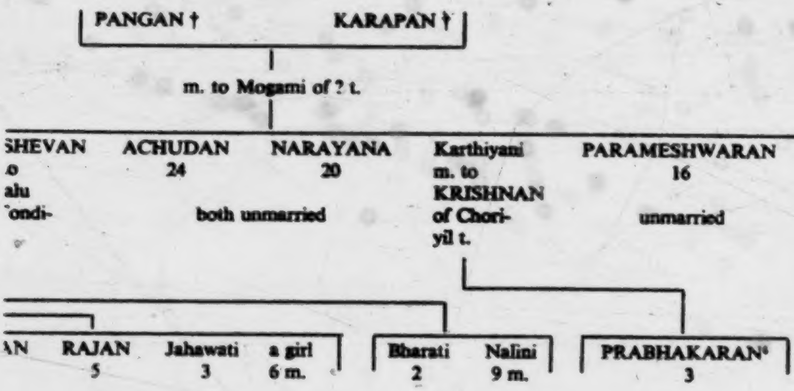
[6] Followed by a girl aged six

Conventional signs as in Table

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Tiyas

*595
601


PANGAN †
KARAPAN †
m. to Mogami of ? t.
SHEVAN
o
alu
ondi-
ACHUDAN
24
NARAYANA
20
both unmarried
Karthiyani
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Chori-
yil t.
PARAMESHWARAN
16
unmarried
AN
RAJAN
5
Jahawati
3
a girl
6 m.
Bharati
2
Nalini
9 m.
PRABHAKARAN⁶
3

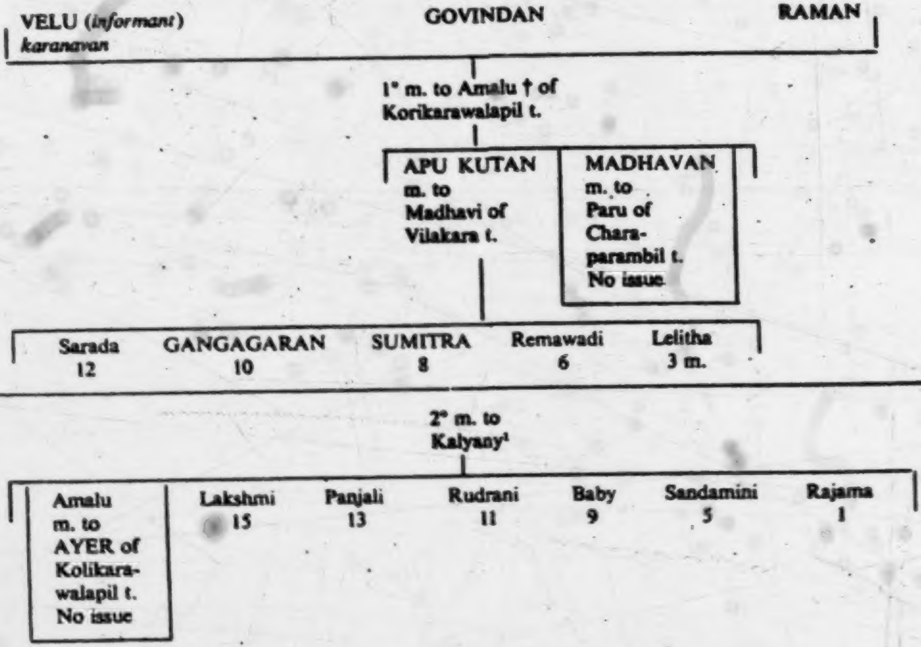
ved by a girl who died in infancy.
ved by two girls, a boy and two other girls who all died in infancy.
ved by a girl who died in infancy and another girl now aged three months.
ved by two girls aged eight and ten months respectively.
ved by a girl who died in infancy.
ved by a girl aged six months, yet unnamed.
onal signs as in Table 3.

[Facing p. 181-C]

*595
601

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Tiyas

TABLE 5. GENEALOGY OF KATUKULANGARA *Tarawad*, KEREGETHIL HOUSEHOLD. PART 2.


VELU (*informant*)
karanavan
GOVINDAN
RAMAN
1° m. to Amalu † of
Korikarawalapil t.
APU KUTAN
m. to
Madhavi of
Vilakara t.
MADHAVAN
m. to
Paru of
Chara-
parambil t.
No issue
Sarada
12
GANGAGARAN
10
SUMITRA
8
Remawadi
6
Lelitha
3 m.
2° m. to
Kalyany[1]
Amalu
m. to
AYER of
Kolikara-
walapil t.
No issue
Lakshmi
15
Panjali
13
Rudrani
11
Baby
9
Sandamini
5
Rajama
1

[1] Sister of first, deceased wife, therefore of same *tarawad*.

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

Tiyas

well as the unmarried women and girls lived in the house. The women 595*
who had married out had left and were living with the families of their 591
husbands. What struck me was the considerable number of unmarried [589]
boys and girls relatively advanced in age who were still at home. Tiyas, I [582]
was told, marry late, usually after puberty, which is exceptional in India.

It will be noticed that polyandry was only practised in the elder gen- 595*
erations. Not a single case occurs among the younger people. The
reason for this is that the Thiyya Makkathayam Act of 1940 made poly- [656]
andry illegal in Cochin, and nobody was thus at liberty to marry in this
way any longer. Property, which was undivided so far, would be di- [428]
vided, Velu told us, when he and his brothers and his wife had died.
This was in accordance with the new legislation, and all the children,
girls included, would have a share. The boys, however, would be al-
lotted double portions. Thus for their children by the two marriages,
if the girls were not married by then, there would be thirteen shares, of
which the boys would get the four first.

Velu assured me that formerly they were polyandrous in his caste so 595*
that the property should not be divided up. It kept the brothers together, 178
they did not get involved in the quarrels of their wives, it was not neces-
sary to split up into separate families, and thus was a very good system.
Times, however, had changed, he said and now because there was a law
forbidding polyandry, there was no longer any reason to keep what they
owned undivided. He seemed to think that the old way of doing things
had its advantages, especially in the possibility of bringing in another
woman, if this were desirable and the brothers agreed to it (as he and
his younger brothers had done), without being obliged to separate and
start splinter households as had now become necessary. When I ques-
tioned him as to how they would keep going now that the economy of
an undivided polyandrous household was no longer possible, he replied
that it would oblige them to turn coolies, cut laterite, plough for others,
carry on petty trade and emigrate to the towns.

On the 2nd of November 1949, I went again to Cochin accompanied 595*
by an interpreter. We drove into the Tallapilli taluk of the northern part [103]
of that state, and visited a village near Kunnamkulam, called Perum-
pillav (big jack fruit tree). The people living here called themselves [101]
"Ezhuvas", but, in accordance with recent Cochin legislation, they were [564]
assimilated to Tiyas or Thiyyas as the local spelling has it. (Article 5,
paragraph i of the Thiyya *Makkathayam* Act of 1940 states that "Thiyya
included *Ezhuva*, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recog-
nized as such.")

*595 We went first to the house of some rich Tiyas, in which we had been told that there were three elderly men living in polyandry. It was a large mansion standing in a well-kept compound, and we met one of the members of the older generation as well as a young man. When we asked them about their polyandry, they both shook their heads and protested that we had been "misinformed". Nobody in their family practised this marital custom, they said, although they admitted that the previous generation had done so. Since there was nothing we could do about it, and it would be useless to argue with such people, we went on. However, from the next house that we reached, we heard that what we had previously been told was correct and that these men did not tell us the truth. Because they were well off, they liked to play up at being "progressive", we heard, and therefore denied their polyandry which was nevertheless a fact.

The two tumbled-down, thatched houses which we next visited, stood in a very small compound in which plantain and coconut trees grew. Two old men, one very bald, and an aged lady, her flat bosoms hanging down dismally on her bare chest, came out to greet us. They were very [574] hospitable and kind, and offered us fresh coconut milk from a nut, to drink. The younger of the two men, Raman, aged sixty five, volunteered to give us any information that we wished to obtain from him.

*595 601 He told us that he and his two elder brothers, Shangu and Mundon, had been married to Chaki, the white haired old lady, for fifty years. Shangu, the eldest, had now been dead for three years, but Mundon, three years his junior, was alive at just seventy one. He was the other man, with the bald head. They lived in the larger of the two thatched houses. Kandapan, their third son, who was married to Lakshmi and had a small boy three years old, lived in the smaller house. They had only been married for four years, since "the last renewal".

427 This remark, it seemed, was an allusion to the rent. The latter consisted of a *kurikanam* lease, for which they paid three rupees a year (or the equivalent in bananas, they said), and a renewal fee of six rupees every twelve years. They had paid the latter four years ago, and it had gone to their *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin whose *illam* was called Granghat *illam*. By profession they were toddy tappers, but since the 273 [463] [656] introduction of prohibition in Madras State, they had been deprived of their livelihood. It seemed that there was an inner belt of some miles within Cochin territory in which the distilling and sale of liquor was prohibited in order to prevent smuggling over the border, and that they, since their house was situated ten miles inland, were affected by this regulation.

000

regulation. They said that they were starving and that they had had 737
nothing to eat that morning. When I asked them how they would solve
their problem, they replied that it was better that I "did not ask". Evil
times had befallen them in their old age, and they really did not know
what they could do about it; they might hire themselves out as labourers,
if they were not so old and feeble. They agreed with me that the in- [161]
crease in population in Kerala over the years had made the difficulty of
feeding so many people increasingly great.

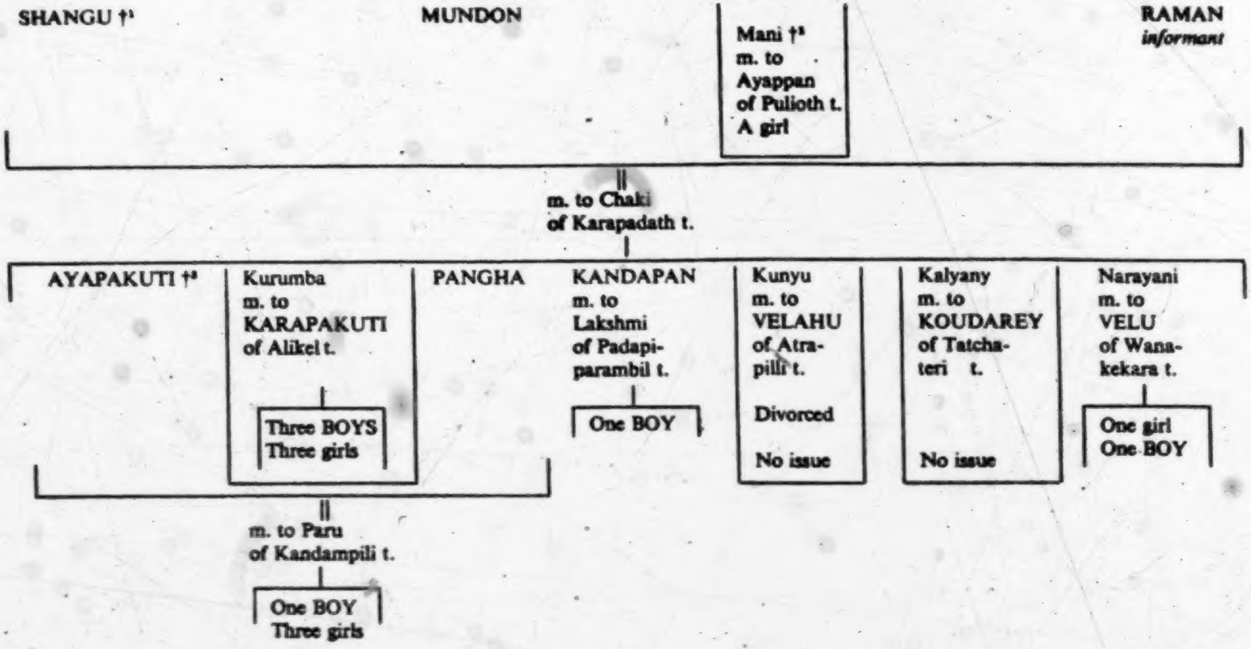
Their two elder sons, called Ayapakuti and Pangha, lived polyan- 595*
drously, I heard, some few miles away, on a bit of land which their 601
fathers had given them fourteen years ago, in the fifth year of their marriage and after the birth of their fourth child. The common wife, Paru, was now alone with the thirty five year old second son, as the elder had died two years ago, also at the age of thirty five. It seemed that Kandapan had originally been part of the polyandrous household but that, tiring of living in this way, he had found a wife for himself, Lakshmi, with whom he had returned to the parental house to live, after the last renewal of the lease, four years ago.

With the old folk and Kandapan's family, was also Kunyu, a daughter, twenty five years old and divorced ten years ago. She had been married at the age of fourteen to Velahu, a man eighteen years her senior. She was childless and had not remarried. She lived in the larger house with her parents.

I took photographs of the family and a group picture of them can be 595*
seen in Fig. 10. I also made their genealogy, which is attached herewith in Table 6. I stayed on and discussed various problems with these people for part of the afternoon (having provided for them to have lunch in the meantime, which was most welcome to them in their starved con-
dition). They told me that even if polyandry was now prohibited since [178]
the Act passed in 1940, it had been dying out for some years in any case. The legislation – of which they really had no idea at all – was only the confirmation and the consecration of a *de facto* state of affairs.
Concerning the inheritance of girls in Tiya families, I may mention that, 428
since the passing of the Act, property would have to be divided. Girls would also get their share which would be half that of the boys; they would pass it on to their own children and, since they were *makkathayam*, it would become merged with that of the latter's fathers. If there were no boys and only girls in the household, its property would cease to exist after the girls had been married off, for each of them would take her part away in accordance with the above.

#595
601

TABLE 6. GENEALOGY OF KALADIWALAPIL HOUSEHOLD AND *Tarawad.*


SHANGU †[1]
MUNDON
Mani †[2] m. to Ayappan of Pulioth t. A girl
RAMAN *informant*
m. to Chaki of Karapadath t.
AYAPAKUTI †[3]
Kurumba m. to KARAPAKUTI of Alikel t.
Three BOYS Three girls
PANGHA
KANDAPAN m. to Lakshmi of Padapiparambil t.
One BOY
Kunyu m. to VELAHU of Atrapilli t.
Divorced
No issue
Kalyany m. to KOUDAREY of Tatchateri t.
No issue
Narayani m. to VELU of Wanakekara t.
One girl One BOY
m. to Paru of Kandampili t.
One BOY Three girls

[1] Died three years ago, aged 71

[2] Died at the age of thirty, would be sixty-seven today.

[3] Died aged thirty-five, two years ago.

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Tiyas

Tiyas

We still had time that afternoon, to drive back into the village of 595*
Perumpillav and to interview some more polyandrous Tiyas. We drove to a Tiya house to have a talk with a man, a woman and a boy who confirmed to us that they belonged to families practising polyandry.

The man was called Tami; he was fifty six years old and worked as a [115]
coolie. He had the *Kudiyiruppu* lease of a house for which he paid three [427]
rupees a year to a Mopla, Melethil Kunyuni Haidaros. The latter was himself the *verumpattamdar* of a *janmi* called Cheralayam Nambidi.
(I was unable to find out if he was a Brahmin, an Ambalavasi or a [423]
Samantan; with the title *Nambidi* which he bore, he could have been any one of the three, but I suspect that he was a Brahmin, as this is the caste which owns the land in north Cochin.)

Tami's household name was Kanadiwalapil, which was also that of 595*
his *tarawad*. He and his brother, Narayan, were married to Chidu, alias 601
Sri Devi, a woman now aged fifty. The younger brother was his junior by twenty one years and had been married as second husband to their common wife when he was only five years old. There were five children, of whom the two eldest were girls, now married off elsewhere. All the boys were unmarried, and worked with their fathers as coolies.

I found the informant extremely difficult to question. He was con- [115]
tinually contradicting himself, and pretended that he knew no names nor ages. Thus I was unable to discover the name of his wife's *tarawad*, how many children his second daughter had had, and the ages of his two eldest sons, Velu and Kutan. I give the genealogy as I struggled to make it, in Table 7, but I fear that it is sadly incomplete and perhaps not even reliable. It was nevertheless of interest to find out something, however little, from a Tiya polyandrous labourer.

We next turned to the woman. She was accompanied by her twelve year old son, Balakrishnan, and at once showed herself, in striking contrast to her predecessor, to be bright and helpful. This was a great relief after the previous painful session. I was able to record the name of her *tarawad*, but did not manage to ascertain that of the household into which she had married.

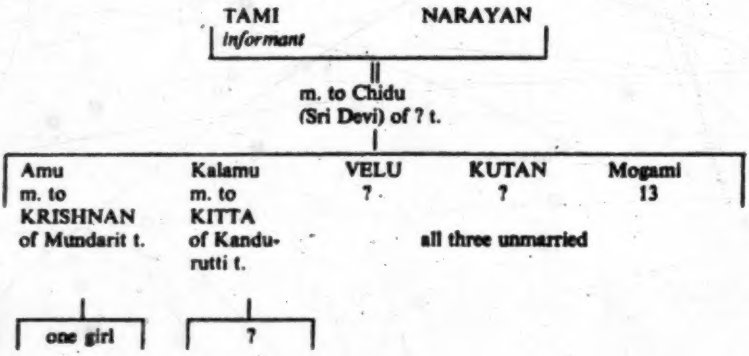
She told me that she had had five husbands, all of them paid (free) agricultural labourers, living as *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the same Cheralayam Nambidi *janmi*. She did not know the amount of rent paid yearly, but told me that her husbands' family had been settled here for a very long time – for eighty or a hundred years, as she put it. They had little work to do, not enough in fact to keep such a large family alive. They had been toddy tappers once. Kalyany had been married publicly

[Text continues on p. 189]

Tiyas

#595
601

TABLE 7. GENEALOGY OF KANADIWALAPIL HOUSEHOLD AND *Tarawad*.


TAMI
informant
NARAYAN
m. to Chidu
(Sri Devi) of ? t.
Amu
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Mundarit t.
Kalamu
m. to
KITTA
of Kandurutti t.
VELU
?
KUTAN
?
Mogami
13
all three unmarried
one girl
?

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

Tiyas
Thandans

to the four eldest boys to begin with. That was twenty seven years ago, 595 *
and she was forty six now. Innayakkan, the last husband, had joined 601
his brothers later, when he was twelve and with their consent, but there had been no ceremony.

Very soon after this, Iyyer, the third husband, finding conditions too [464
difficult in Kerala, did what many Tiyas had done since time immemorial; he emigrated to Ceylon, where he worked as a railway coolie. 167]
Kalyany had remained with Koppan, Pangoda, Ponan and Innayakkan, and she had had five children by them. Then Ponan died of tuberculosis, ten years after the wedding, aged twenty five. Fifteen years ago, the two eldest men had also left for Ceylon and sent Iyyer back to look after their wife. He had returned, had taken up his former profession of toddy tapping, and was her only real husband now. She had had three more children by him, Balakrishnan was the second and the only boy. There had been no news at all of Koppan and Pangoda, and she presumed that they were dead. Inayakkan had run away from home some time back and had never been heard of again; he was also presumed dead. With Iyyer and herself lived Kesheran, her second son, two unmarried girls and the three last children. Work was still scarce, [464
and pay meagre, so that Aiyappan, the eldest, had gone to Kozhikode (Calicut) in order to try and gain employment. His brother, Padmanapan, had done the same, but he had gone to Madras, on the east coast. 166]
She had been trying to help Balakrishnan find work all day: yesterday he had been given a job as a coolie, but today, he was unemployed.

Kalyany told me that she was related to the brothers of the Katukulangara *tarawad* whom I had interviewed at Kadavelur on the 27th of October. She was a half sister of Velu by another mother. I found this family particularly interesting, because it illustrated, more than any other Tiya one encountered so far, the ancient and persistant connection which the caste has with Ceylon. Their genealogy is given in Table 8.

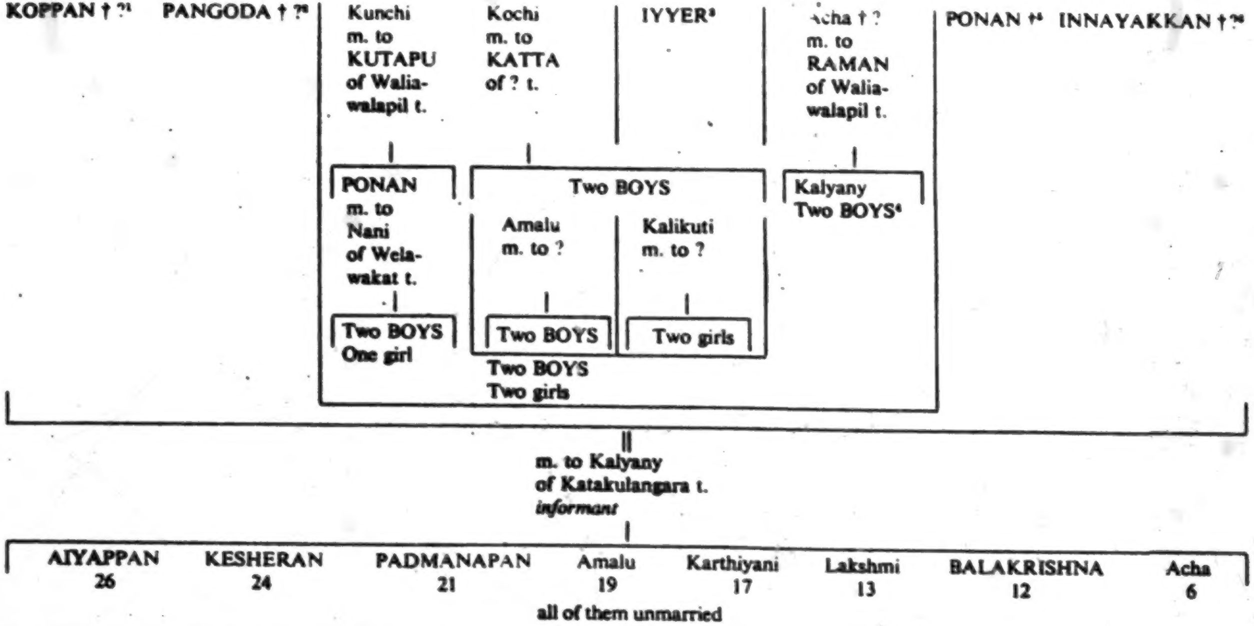
Before going on to an account of my visits to Kammalans and other 595*
artisan families practising polyandry in Kerala, I would like to give here, together with the material that I collected about Tiyas, the description of a Thandan family that I went to see on the 25th of November 1949.

They lived in a large house, standing in a big garden of coconut trees, [351
arecanut palms, plantains and jacks. It was situated at the cross-roads of the Nilambur valley track and the highway to Pattambi, quite close 361]
to Shoranur.

I began by interviewing the matriarch of the household, an old lady [601]
of eighty, called Kali, the widow of five husbands. The household and

[Text continues on p. 191]

TABLE 8. GENEALOGY OF A TIYA LABOURER'S FAMILY


KOPPAN † ?[1]
PANGODA † ?[2]
Kunchi m. to KUTAPU of Walia-walapil t.
Kochi m. to KATTA of ? t.
IYYER[3]
Acha † ? m. to RAMAN of Walia-walapil t.
PONAN †[5]
INNAYAKKAN † ?[6]
PONAN m. to Nani of Wela-wakat t.
Two BOYS
Kalyany Two BOYS[4]
Amalu m. to ?
Kalikuti m. to ?
Two BOYS One girl
Two BOYS
Two girls
Two BOYS Two girls
m. to Kalyany of Katakulangara t.
informant
AIYAPPAN 26
KESHERAN 24
PADMANAPAN 21
Amalu 19
Karthiyani 17
Lakshmi 13
BALAKRISHNA 12
Acha 6
all of them unmarried

[1] Left fifteen years ago for Colombo, Ceylon; whereabouts unknown, presumed dead, aged forty five.

[2] Also emigrated to Ceylon where also presumed dead, aged thirty two.

[3] After many years in Ceylon, returned home fourteen years ago.

[4] This whole family has emigrated to Trichynopoly in Madras state. Acha is possibly dead.

[5] Died of tuberculosis, aged twenty five.

[6] Has run away from home, whereabouts unknown, possibly dead.

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Tiyas
595*
601

Thandans

tarawad name was Neripatta, and the property now belonged to the old woman and her sons. They were *verumpattam* cultivators for a Nayar *kanamdar*, the Shoranur *desammangalam* (village headman) whom I had met. They paid a rent of five rupees. 595* 601 [427)

I heard that of the old generation, the four brothers, Paini, Krishna, Raman, Aiyappan and Narayan, were dead – although there was some doubt about Narayan, the last one. As he had emigrated to Singapore and had never come back, they presumed that he had died there. They had all been wed polyandrously to Kali when she was seventeen, and she was now left with her four sons, who had begun by being polyandrous, but who had eventually taken wives of their own, the common wife, Paru, having stayed with the eldest, Velandi. The property had, however, not been split up, and they lived in the mansion-sized house, which was happily large enough to contain them all. Presumably it was also sufficiently big to keep the women from quarrelling and dragging the men into their squabbles – something which people who live in polyandry seem particularly to fear. Of the third generation, the two grandsons, Velu and Krishna, had also lived polyandrously, having taken one Kalyany as a common wife. Like their two sisters they had, however, died, aged thirty and twenty respectively, leaving a couple of boys with their widow to look after. There had thus been three generations of polyandrous marriages in this family. [167]

Another point of interest was the fact that two of Kali's sons, Paragnoden and Krishna had broken away, the former after having first been married with his elder brothers to Paru. They had married their fathers' sisters' daughters, Vali in the first case, and Janeki in the second. When I enquired why this was so, I found it difficult to get a precise answer. I was told that was because this was a "right" marriage, and that if possible, marriage with a *machchunan* is "best". But I evoked only silence and some quizzical looks when I asked why then Paragnoden was first married polyandrously to Paru. It seemed to me – although this is only my personal impression and I was not told so – that the polyandrous marriage was gone through with because it was customary in those days, when the elder brother got married, for the younger ones to join in. Later, when Paragnoden, for reasons which he did not impart to me, felt like putting up a household of his own, he naturally turned to his cross-cousin, on his fathers' side. He was eighteen when he married Paru, with his brothers, and twenty two when he left her and took Vali to wife. This would not account, however, for Krishna, the youngest, not having also been married to Paru. It may be, of course that he was 595* 582 601

Thandans
Kammalans

*595 so, but that they would not tell me. He was twenty five when he took
60 his fathers' sisters' daughter, Janeki, to be his wife.

582 I found Kali difficult to interview. She was old, very old by Indian
*595 and Kerala standards, and quite plainly showed her displeasure at being
601 bothered. Consequently I went over to asking Paragnoden for the in-
115 formation that I wanted, but he seemed extraordinarily ignorant and lazy. Finally, it was from a neighbour who was called in, that most of what I learned was gathered. It is from what these combined informants told me, and from what my guide and interpreter knew about the family, that I was able to piece the genealogy together. It will be found in Tables 9 and 10 herewith. I have been obliged to put it on two tables because of the size of the first generation.

*595 On Table 9, Vali and Lakshmi are shown. Now deceased, they were
601 sisters of the five brothers. They live to be fifty and fifty three respectively. Personal names and *tarawad* names were not always known by the informants, and in these cases, I have been obliged to put in interrogation marks – except where a *tarawad* is qualified as being one from the village of Palappuram, for this at least gives a geographical location.
582 It is to be noted in Table 9 how advanced in age[7] are some of the un-
932 married young people, but then Thandans do marry late in Kerala, differing in this from other parts of India. The congenital idiot, Narayan, son of Paragnoden, was at his father's side during the interview.

*595 This completed my general study of Thandan and Tiya (Thiyya) polyandry. However, before this date occurred, I had already started visiting Kammalan houses to find out what the polyandry of this caste of artisans was like.

On the 12th of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, near the borders of Palghat taluk, to interview the Tiyas I had seen there ten years before. I was accompanied by two interpreters and a guide. We were not successful in finding the Tiya family we sought, as it had moved elsewhere in the intervening years, but we found a blacksmith living on the same bit of property, as I have already reported
*595 earlier (see p. 178). Before I give an account of this family's polyandry,
564 however, I would like to describe that of a household of goldsmiths,
[326] living close by, as, hierarchally, these craftsmen come before their fellow blacksmiths in the Kammalan caste.

In the language of Kerala, Malayalam, they are called *Tatham* (see p. 173) and they are among those who are said to have gone to Ceylon
[361] in the days of the Perumals. They are not a wealthy group of people, and this became apparent at once when we entered their compound near

7[i.e. 22, 20, 12 & 10 yrs. old -- Analyst]

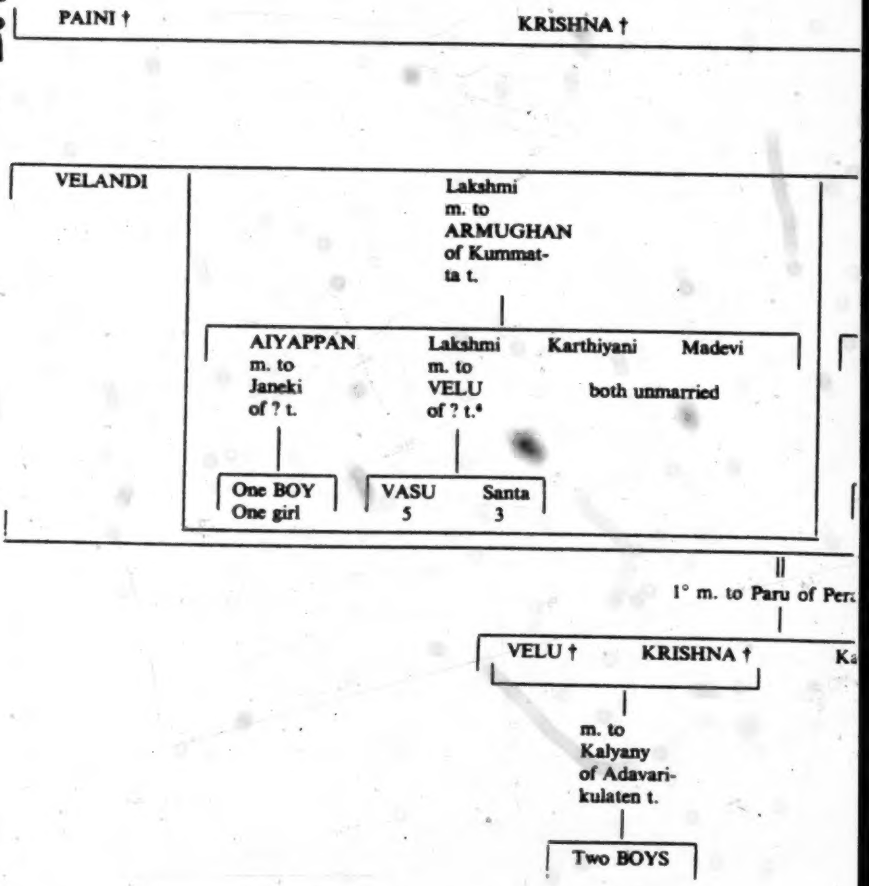
[Text continues on p. 194]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Thandans

TABLE 9. GENEALOGY OF NERIPATTA HOUSEHOLD AND *Tarawad*. PAR

*595
601


PAINI †
KRISHNA †
VELANDI
Lakshmi m. to ARMUGHAN of Kummat-ta t.
AIYAPPAN m. to Janeki of ? t.
Lakshmi m. to VELU of ? t.⁴
Karthiyani
Madevi
both unmarried
One BOY
One girl
VASU 5
Santa 3
1° m. to Paru of Per
VELU †
KRISHNA †
Ka
m. to Kalyany of Adavari-kulaten t.
Two BOYS

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

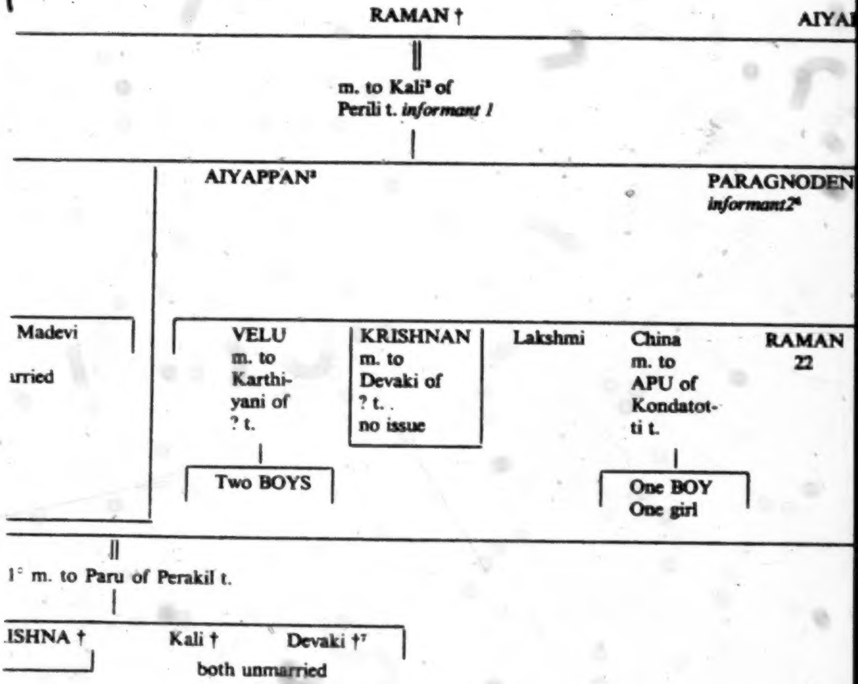
[Facing p. 192-A]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Thandans

D *Tarawad*. PART 1.

*595
601


RAMAN †
AIYA
m. to Kali[3] of
Perili t. *informant 1*
AIYAPPAN[5]
PARAGNODEN
informant2[4]
Madevi
rried
VELU
m. to
Karthi-
yani of
? t.
KRISHNAN
m. to
Devaki of
? t.
no issue
Lakshmi
China
m. to
APU of
Kondatot-
ti t.
RAMAN
22
Two BOYS
One BOY
One girl
1° m. to Paru of Perakil t.
ISHNA †
Kali †
Devaki †[7]
both unmarried

---

[1] Emigrat

[2] Now eig

[3] 2° m. (a
Tina
of Perali
KES

[4] 2° m. (a
Vali, his

[5] His fath

[6] At Manj
very sma

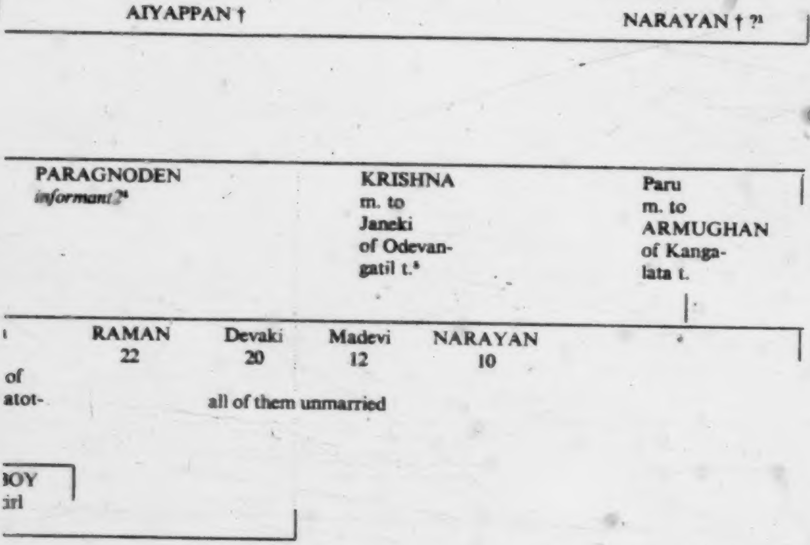
[7] Velu die
died of d

[Facing P. 192-B)

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Thandans

*595
601


AIYAPPAN †
NARAYAN † ?[1]
PARAGNODEN
informant[2][4]
KRISHNA
m. to
Janeki
of Odevangatil t.[5]
Paru
m. to
ARMUGHAN
of Kangalata t.
RAMAN
22
Devaki
20
Madevi
12
NARAYAN
10
of
atot-
all of them unmarried
BOY
girl

---

[1] Emigrated to Singapore, fate unknown, presumed dead.

[2] Now eighty years old

[3] 2° m. (at 43, now 55, after 15 years of first marriage) to:
Tina
of Peralli t.

KESEVAN 11 — Lakshmi 9

[4] 2° m. (at 22, now 45, after 4 years of first marriage) to:
Vali, his fathers' sister's daughter (see Part 2).

[5] His fathers' sister's daughter (see Part 2).

[586]

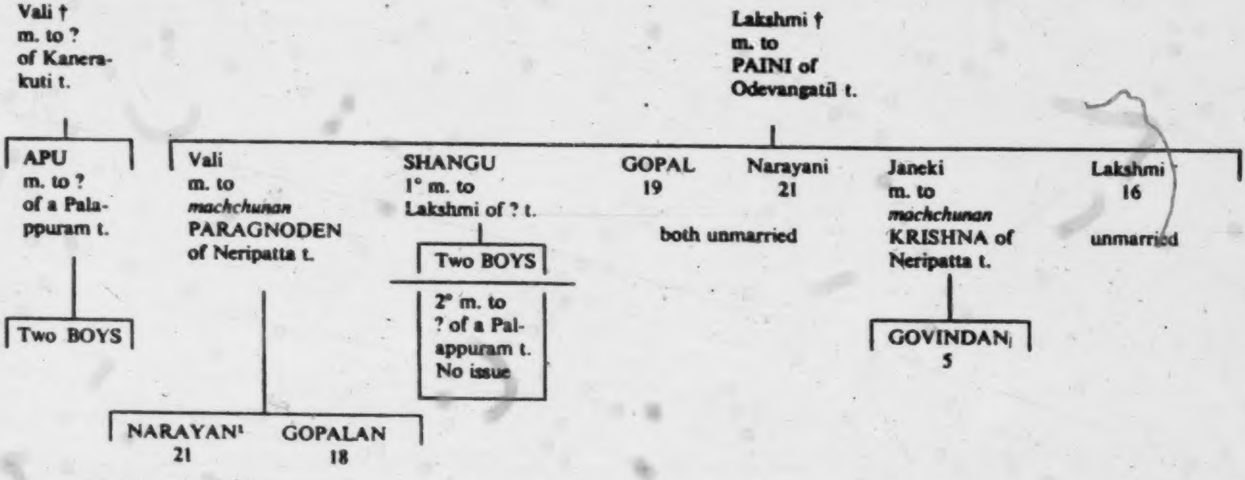
[6] At Manjara. Now divorced; the children are with the mother because they are still very small.

[165]

[7] Velu died of "fever"; Krishna of a "stomach ache"; Kali fell into a well; Devaki died of dysentry.

[facing p. 192-C]

TABLE 10. GENEALOGY OF NERIPATTA HOUSEHOLD AND *Tarawad*. PART 2.


Vali †
m. to ?
of Kanera-
kuti t.
Lakshmi †
m. to
PAINI of
Odevangatil t.
APU
m. to ?
of a Pala-
ppuram t.
Two BOYS
Vali
m. to
machchunan
PARAGNODEN
of Neripatta t.
NARAYAN¹
21
GOPALAN
18
SHANGU
1° m. to
Lakshmi of ? t.
Two BOYS
2° m. to
? of a Pal-
appuram t.
No issue
GOPAL
19
Narayani
21
both unmarried
Janeki
m. to
machchunan
KRISHNA of
Neripatta t.
GOVINDAN
5
Lakshmi
16
unmarried

---

[1] A congenital idiot.

Conventional signs as in Table 3

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Thandans
595*
601

*595 the cross-roads of the main Shoranur-Palghat highway of the road to
564 Lakkidi, a few furlongs down the latter, on the right hand side. In con-
[361] trast to the Thandan houses to which we had been, although not to the
Tiya (Thiyya) houses of the Cochin labourers, the place looked rather
[342] miserable. It was a thatched palm-leaf house, standing on a red laterite
loam platform, in the middle of some paddy fields. There were signs
[241] about that these Tathans were not only goldsmiths but that they now
[231] also practised agriculture. There was paddy lying about to dry in heaps
in the yard, and there were stalls for bullocks at the back.

*595 We interviewed a man called Raman and his brother Kochen, aged
[601] fifty four and fifty two respectively, who lived polyandrously with their
wife, Kurumba, forty five years old. They seemed rather impressed by
us, and were reluctant to speak. They observed the outward forms of
[574] hospitality, however, and presented us with fresh coconuts for us to
drink the milk.

Raman told us that the household's name was Padijarehil, meaning
"Western", and that it was part of five others which constituted the
[611] Uzhugaparekil *tarawad*. The latter was *makkathayam*, as we expected,
[614] and exogamous, as was also their *kiriyam*, although, here too, they only
observed the rule in matters which concerned those members of it whom
*595 they knew. They had two and a half acres of paddy fields, in simple
427 *verumpattam* lease from a Nambudri Brahmin janmi called Kodiertha-
293 mana. For this they paid five rupees a year and handed in a part of the
harvest – five hundred *parahs*, I have in my notes, three hundred from
the *kanni* crop and two hundred from the *magaram*.[1] As it was an ordi-
nary *verumpattam*, there was no renewal fee. They had a deficit this
year of forty *parahs* (roughly lbs. 866⅛) and they were wondering what
they could do to make it good. Last year they had done "other work"
[464] (presumably such as hiring themselves out as labourers) in order to
raise the cash needed to compensate for the deficiency in grain, and
*595 they might do the same thing now. When I asked them what kind of
[326] goldsmith's work they did, they laughed and said that they had given
this up; how could they carry on with their traditional profession, they
[436] asked, when the sovereign which was once worth Rs. 25 had reached
Rs. 77?

[601] Raman and Kochen had had eleven children in their polyandrous

---

[804] [1] This again seems too much. It is equivalent to lbs. 10,830 (1 Palghat *parah* = 10 *edengalis* = 40 *nalis* (1 *nali* = *tolas* 21⅝ in s. Walluvanad and Palghat) = 866,40 *tolas*; as 40 *tolas* = 1 lb. in s. Malabar, 1 *parah* = 866,40 : 40 = 21⅝ lbs and 500 = lbs 10,830).

Kammalans

union with Kurumba. They were not the only ones following the custom in the family, as their sister, Paru, now dead, had also had two husbands, the brothers Aiyappan and Narayan of the Vetukatukundu *tarawad*. She had died in childbirth, when her little boy was born; the child died too. Nilu, their youngest sister, had also died giving birth to a boy, her first-born, who did not survive either. Of what Narayani, the next youngest sister, had died, was not clear, but it had been after she had given birth to a little girl who was still alive. Of their children, the eldest, a boy called Kunju, and his sister, the eldest but one and bearing the name of Kunji, had married a brother and sister of a neighbouring *tarawad* called Putanparekil; there had been no marriage between cross-cousins. They did, however, say that this was the best form of union, as the Thandans had said. The genealogy of the family is given in Table 11. 595* 601 [582]

I have described how, previously, we went into the other compound, where the Tiyas of 1939 used to live, to question the family of blacksmiths about their polyandry. This sub-caste of the Kammalans is called *Karuwan* or *Perinkollan* and they, too, are not a wealthy class. These lived only a few years from the Thatan household just described, and their dwelling was very similar to the other. The yard of the thatched house had blacksmith's instruments lying about it, which showed at once who lived there. 595* 564 326 [351]

We met and interviewed a man called Ittenam, aged fifty five, whose brother, Poreyn, with whom he used to share a common wife, Paru, was now dead. He was a widower, and lived with his sons, Raman and Kunyuni, twenty two and twenty years old, who were present at our talk. Their common wife, Nani, twenty, was also there, a little baby boy on her hip, and the two other women with her were her sister-in-law, Narayani, twenty four, who was the wife of both her brothers and also the sister of her two husbands, and Kunji, the thirty six year old elder sister of Narayani, Raman and Kunyuni. A picture of her is given in Fig. 12; she was here on a visit, as her household was elsewhere. All the women, except Kunji, were bare-breasted, and, when they were not suckling the babies on their hips, milk ran down onto their abdomens from their naked breasts. Itteenam's elder sister, Unuli, was alive, aged sixty one, but she was married and had her home elsewhere with her husband, Narayan. 595* 601 [853]

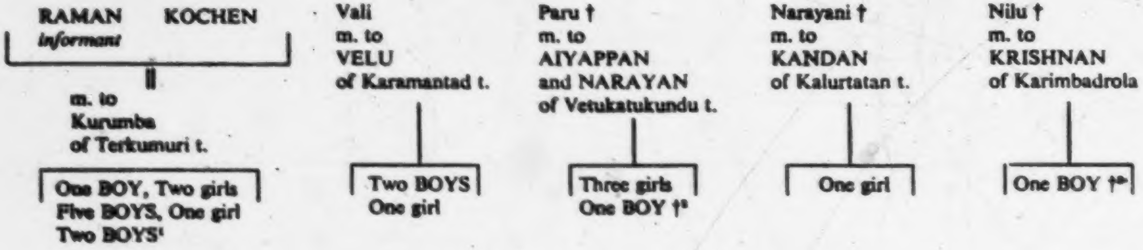
When I made the genealogy of this household, I found that its name was Mudrikkelparampil. The *tarawad* was similarly named and was exogamous together with the *kiriyam*, as was to be expected. *Makka-* [614]

[Text Continues on P. 197]

#595
601

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kammalans

TABLE 11. GENEALOGY OF UZHUGAPAREKIL *Tarawad*, PADIJAREHIL HOUSEHOLD.


RAMAN
informant
KOCHEN
m. to
Kurumba
of Terkumuri t.
One BOY, Two girls
Five BOYS, One girl
Two BOYS[1]
Vali
m. to
VELU
of Karamantad t.
Two BOYS
One girl
Paru †
m. to
AIYAPPAN
and NARAYAN
of Vetukatukundu t.
Three girls
One BOY †[2]
Narayani †
m. to
KANDAN
of Kalurtatan t.
One girl
Nilu †
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Karimbadrola
One BOY †[3]

[1] KUNJU, m. to Narayani of Putanparekil t., two girls.
Kunji, m. to KRISHNAN of Tarayil t., one BOY, one girl.
Lakshmi, m. to KARAPAN of Putanparekil t. (brother's wife's brother), one BOY.
VELAIDEN, 19, unmarried.
NARAYAN, 15, unmarried.
KUNYAN, 12, unmarried.
RAMAN, 10, unmarried.
KRISHNAN, 8.
Narayani or Ameni, 5.
Nameless BOY, dead.
NAMBAN, 1½.

[2] Died at birth; killing his mother.

[3] ditto.

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

thayam was followed and caste, or rather sub-caste, endogamy. There 595*
was more polyandry in the second generation of this family than in any 601
other encountered so far. I found that Kunji was married to two hus- [614]
bands; Lakshmi, aged thirty three, to four husbands; Paru, thirty, to
two husbands; Sita, twenty eight, to three husbands; and Narayani, al-
ready mentioned, to two husbands. All the respective husbands were
brothers, and only fraternal polyandry was practised. The women had [582]
all married early: Kunji and Yakshmi at sixteen, Paru at fifteen, Sita a
bit later at twenty four, and Narayani, the youngest, at eighteen. The
reason for which Sita had married later was that she had been taken by
the three younger husbands of her elder sister Lakshmi, after seventeen
years of marriage with the latter. Only Kanju, the eldest, had remained
with Lakshmi, and Raman, Narayan and Krishna had decided to marry
Sita jointly, when they found that she was not getting married and
showed no inclination to do so outside. The two younger brothers of [582]
the Mudrikkelparampil household, Raman and Kunyuni, were eighteen
and sixteen when they took Nani to wife; she was now twenty. Poly-
andry certainly did not look as if it were dying out in the blacksmith's
caste, judging, at least, from this striking example.

The property upon which the family lived was worth four thousand 595*
rupees. It consisted of the house, some agricultural implements and a 435
paddy field. The people were tenants of the Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* 427
Kodierthamana, and paid him the rent of a customary *verumpattam*
nine rupees yearly, plus a renewal fee of thrice the rent every twelve
years. Poreyn and Kunyuni were practising smiths, hence the imple- 595*
ments we had seen on coming in, and Raman worked at the Metal In-
dustries Ltd. in Shoranur, where we camped. They also cultivated the [326]
paddy field to produce some of the rice they needed themselves, al- [343]
thought the yield was not very great. The genealogy is given in Table 12. [433]

On the 15th of November, 1949, together with interpreter and guide, 595*
I visited a family belonging to the third sub-caste of the Kamma- 564
lans, that of the carpenters or *Asari* (often pronounced *Ashari*). I heard [335]
that laterite-cutters called *Puri-asari* or "mud carpenters" were assimi- [333]
lated to these people, but that they only constituted a division of the sub-
caste. They are also reputed to be polyandrous; I did no have an op-
portunity, however, to verify this myself.

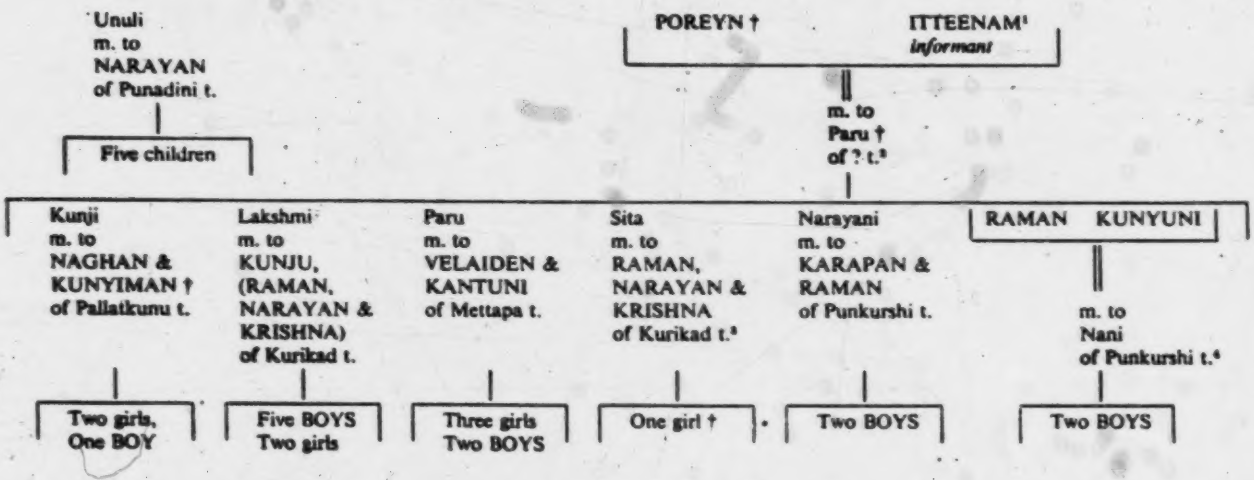
The *Asari* whom I saw that day, lived at Palappuram, a village on the 595*
main Shoranur-Palghat road, some few miles east of Ottappalam. The 342
compound of the house was by the side of the road on the right, just [361]
beyond the village, coming from the west. It was a very poor looking

[Text continues on p 199]

*595
601

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans

TABLE 12. GENEALOGY OF MUDRIKKELPARAMPIL HOUSEHOLD.


Unuli
m. to
NARAYAN
of Punadini t.
Five children
POREYN †
ITTEENAM[1]
informant
m. to
Paru †
of ? t.[2]
Kunji
m. to
NAGHAN &
KUNYIMAN †
of Pallatkunu t.
Two girls,
One BOY
Lakshmi
m. to
KUNJU,
(RAMAN,
NARAYAN &
KRISHNA)
of Kurikad t.
Five BOYS
Two girls
Paru
m. to
VELAIDEN &
KANTUNI
of Mettapa t.
Three girls
Two BOYS
Sita
m. to
RAMAN,
NARAYAN &
KRISHNA
of Kurikad t.[3]
One girl †
Narayani
m. to
KARAPAN &
RAMAN
of Punkurshi t.
Two BOYS
RAMAN
KUNYUNI
m. to
Nani
of Punkurshi t.[4]
Two BOYS

[1] Also called APPER.
[2] *Tarawad* not known.
[3] Lakshmi remained with KUNJU only, after seventeen years of marriage.
[4] Nani is the sister of her husbands' sister's husbands.
Conventional signs as in Table 3.

construction made of woven palm leaves and thatched, and we inter- 595*
viewed two men: Raman, aged fifty seven, and his eldest son, Kutikrish- [342]
nan, who was thirty five. The name of the household and *tarawad* was [614]
Perinkulam.

Kutikrishnan told us that he had two fathers, Raman, who was with 595*
us that day, and Shangu, a younger one, aged fifty five, who was absent. 601
All his fathers' sisters, and there had been three of them, had died in
infancy. His mother was called Lakshmi and was fifty; I was unable to
ascertain the name of the *tarawad* from which she came. Kutikrishnan's
wife bore the same name as his mother and he had had three boys and
a girl by her. Only the daughter was alive, as the sons had all died of [165]
what he described as "convulsions".

I asked why, if the fathers had been polyandrous, the second gener- 595*
ation was not so too. Informant 1 attributed it to times having changed 178
and "civilization spreading". By this he meant that people did not wear [302]
their hair tied in the typical Kerala top-knot on one side of the forehead
any longer and had also taken to growing moustaches; he said, too, that
it was the women now who objected to having more than one husband.
In some marriage agreements, it was specified, he said, that the daugh- [675]
ter of the house would only be given to one man. It was particularly in
wealthy families that this was taking place, because they could afford it.
Raman, informant 2, when consulted as to what he thought of these new
ways, said that they were bad, but what could be done about them? In
olden days, it was always said that polyandry was good because: "Where
four breasts cannot agree, two heads can", meaning that the women
cannot live in peace together while the men can. Nowadays, the young
people did not seem to understand this, and the result was that property
was split up between sons and life made harder for them.

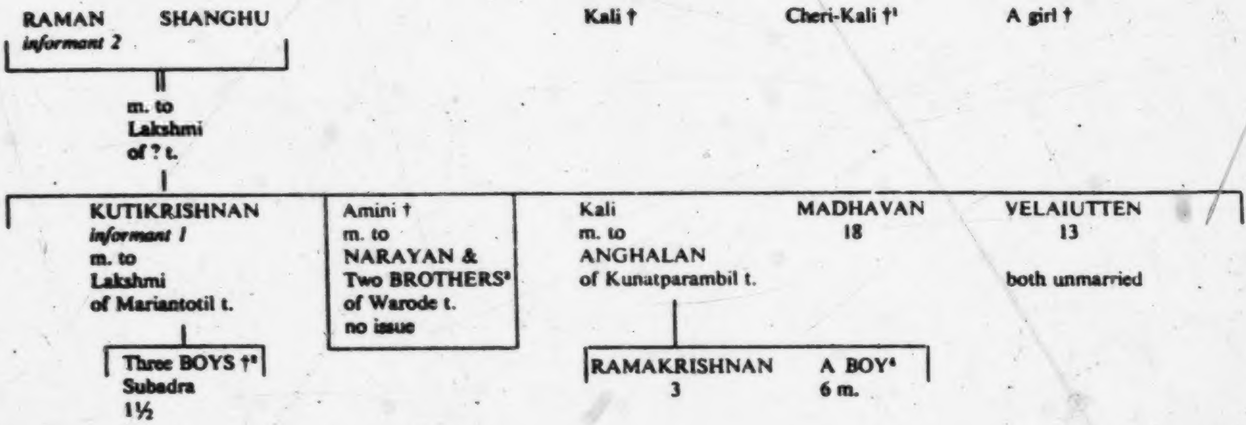
When I came to make out the genealogy of the family, I found that in 595*
spite of all this talk about new-fangled ways, Amini, Kutikrishnan's 601
sister was married polyandrously to three brothers of a *tarawad* called
Warode. It was significant, however, that both informants disclaimed
any knowledge of the names of the brothers of the elder husband, Nara-
yan. Later, I heard that although Madhavan, a younger brother of in-
formant 1, aged eighteeen, had not been publicly married to his sister-
in-law, Lakshmi, he was known to share her with his brother in the old,
traditional polyandrous way. The genealogy is given in Table 13.

The carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans, Raman told us, have ex- 564
ogamous *tarawads* and *kiriyams*. They too, while observing the rule 619
strictly for the *makkathayam tarawad*, are not so careful about it in the 582

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 201]

12:Peter E-5 (1939,1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kammalans
*595
601

TABLE 13. GENEALOGY OF PERINKULAM HOUSE AND *Tarawad*.


RAMAN
informant 2
SHANGHU
m. to
Lakshmi
of ? t.
Kali †
Cheri-Kali †[1]
A girl †
KUTIKRISHNAN
informant 1
m. to
Lakshmi
of Mariantotil t.
Amini †
m. to
NARAYAN &
Two BROTHERS[3]
of Warode t.
no issue
Kali
m. to
ANGHALAN
of Kunatparambil t.
MADHAVAN
18
VELAIUTTEN
13
both unmarried
Three BOYS †[2]
Subadra
1½
RAMAKRISHNAN
3
A BOY[4]
6 m.

[1] All three died early, at 3, 2 and at birth, respectively.

[2] Deaths due to "convulsions".

[3] Names of brothers unknown.

[4] With no name yet.

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

kiriyam; in that matrilineal descent group they limit themselves to not 564
marrying those of their acquaintances whom they know belong to it. 614
The sub-caste is also endogamous, carpenter only marrying "carpen- [582]
tress", and never a *Puri-asari*. Normally,[1] boys alone can inherit the [428]
property, but if there are no male heirs, the girls, even if they are married, will inherit equal shares.

The members of the Perinkulam household were subtenants of a 427
Nayar tenant called Mutad Achutah Nayar, himself the *verumpattamdar* of a Nayar *janmi* from Kavalappaia near Shoranur called Kavalappaia Mupil Nayar. As *kudiyiruppu* tenants of the site where the house was built, they paid a yearly rent of only one rupee.

On the 17th of November, 1949, I visited the house of a member of 595*
the fourth and last sub-caste of the Kammalans, the *Musari* (often pro- [564]
nounced *Mushari*), bell-metal (an alloy of lead and brass) smiths or [326]
braziers. It was near Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, one furlong north of the main road, and to reach it, my interpreters and I followed a very attractive path, sunk deep between high banks of earth and overshadowed with coconut and arecanut palm trees.

We arrived at a miserable house, standing in a grove of palms and [351]
plantains, a red laterite courtyard in front, in which could be seen some stone moulds in grooves – no doubt the foundry. There was nobody about, but when we called out, a little girl (whom we later heard was called Menakhi) appeared and said that she would go and fetch her father. He arrived soon afterwards, a big, strong man, fifty years old,
called Krishnan. He wore his hair over his forehead in the typical [302]
Malayalam top knot, and he had a very ugly face.

The name of the household, he told us, was Puawutterparamba and 595*
it belonged to the Chelamanaparamba *tarawad*. Our informant was the 601
youngest brother of three, and there was a sister called Kali, aged forty nine, about whom, however, he could tell us nothing at all. The whole family used to live, it seemed, at a place called Nedungothani, near Palappuram. That was their village, he said. But then, the elder brother, Konnan, now sixty five years old, had got married some thirty years ago to a woman named Sita whom he had met while "roaming about". He had married late as a result of this proclivity for wandering away from home, and, with his bride, aged fifty today (Krishnan could not tell us the name of her *tarawad*), he had moved to Wallancheri, near Kutipuram, Pattambi, because he had found business bad in Nedungothani. He was still living in Wallancheri and had five children, of whom four were married, the two daughters away to men of other vil-

[1] [i.e. in the carpenter sub-caste of the Kammalans -- Analyst]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll

Kammalans

#595 601 lages. Here again, the informant was unable to give us *tarawad* names, and indeed this was most characteristic of the whole interview. He gave [614 village names instead, saying that they used these now in his caste.

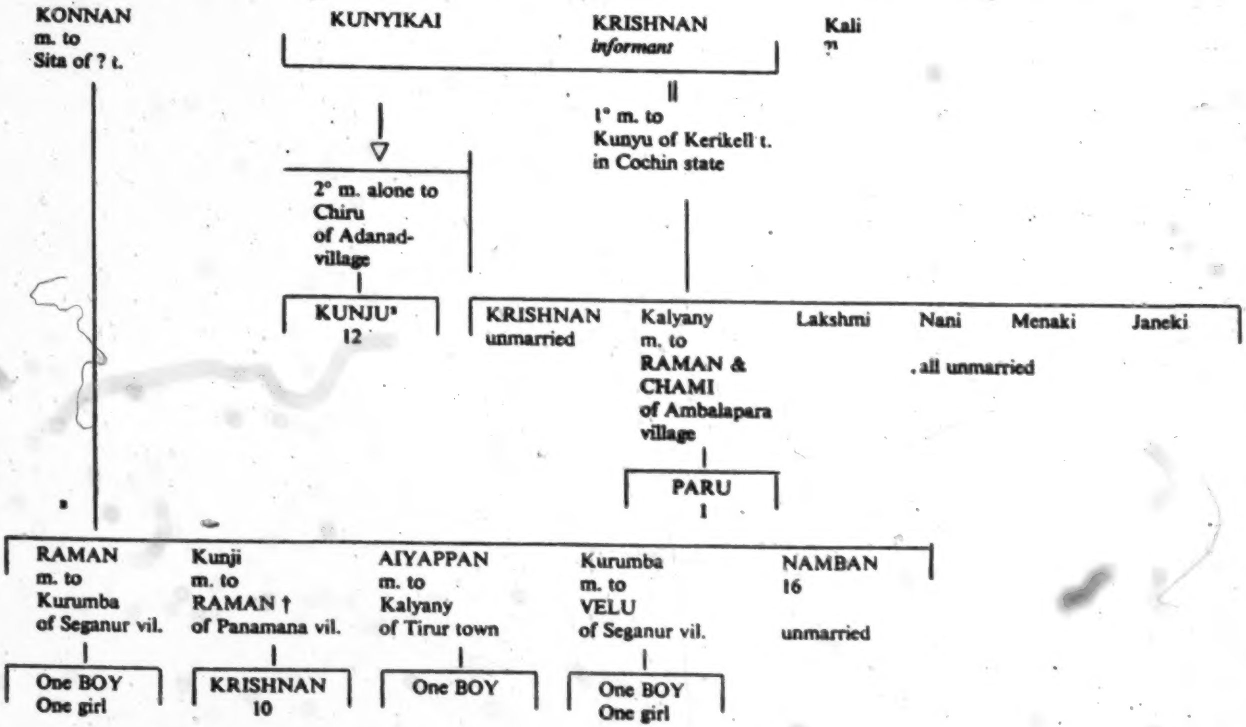
[564] After Konnan had left, their father and their mother's brother got Kunyikai, his elder brother aged sixty two today, and himself married to Kunyu, a young girl fifteen years old at the time, from the Kerikell *tarawad* in Cochin state, resident very close to Lakkidi on the other side of the Ponani river, only about a mile away. That was twenty five years ago, and Kunyu was now forty years old. Very soon, Kunyikai found it impossible to live in this polyandrous atmosphere (Krishnan [584] would give no details), and asked their maternal uncle to get him another wife. Their father had died in the meantime, and their mother's brother was thus the only person who could do this for him. He found Chiru for Kunyikai, and they were wed two years after the former marriage.

All the members of the family never lived together, however, because as soon as the wedding had taken place, Krishnan and the former common wife, took their part of the property (which was not much) and moved to this place near Lakkidi, where they established themselves. They chose it because it was so close to the wife's relatives. All the children they now had were Krishnan's, as Kunyu did not have any for five years after the polyandrous marriage. Krishnan, the eldest boy, now twenty, was born three years after the shift of residence. Kunyikai stayed behind in the family home, and was still there at the time of the interview. He had one boy called Kunju, aged twelve. Of the children of Krishnan and Kunyu, only the second, a daughter called Kalyany, and aged eighteen, was married. She became the wife of two brothers, Raman and Chami, of Ambalapara village, at the age of fifteen. She had one child, a boy called Paru, one year old. The genealogy which I established from this information is given in Table 14.

614 564 I was very surprised to find the informant so ignorant of the *tarawad* names – although he did know that of his own *tarawad*. He assured me that village names had now taken their place and that, in his caste, they [582] observed what might be called "village exogamy". Did this mean that the bellmetal smith's patrilineal clans coincided with topographical units such as villages? There was, it seemed to me, a possibility of this being so, although I could get no confirmation of the hypothesis from anybody, not even from my interpreters and guides. The *Musari* observed [582] exogamy also in their *kiriyams*, Krishnan said, although, as in the case of other castes which I have previously described, they only did so for 428 564 those of the group whom they knew. Inheritance was *makkathayam*,

[TEXT Continues on P. 204]

TABLE 14. GENEALOGY OF PUAWUTTERPARAMBA HOUSEHOLD, CHELAMANAPARAMBA *Tarawad*.


KONNAN
m. to
Sita of ? t.
KUNYIKAI
KRISHNAN
informant
Kali
?[1]
1° m. to
Kunyu of Kerikell t.
in Cochin state
2° m. alone to
Chiru
of Adanad-
village
KUNJU[3]
12
KRISHNAN
unmarried
Kalyany
m. to
RAMAN &
CHAMI
of Ambalapara
village
Lakshmi
Nani
Menaki
Janeki
, all unmarried
PARU
1
[2]
RAMAN
m. to
Kurumba
of Seganur vil.
Kunji
m. to
RAMAN †
of Panamana vil.
AIYAPPAN
m. to
Kalyany
of Tirur town
Kurumba
m. to
VELU
of Seganur vil.
NAMBAN
16
unmarried
One BOY
One girl
KRISHNAN
10
One BOY
One BOY
One girl

[1] The informant said he knew nothing about her.
[2] This family had remained at the original home of the family at Nedungothari near Palappuram.
[3] After marrying, this man and his family moved to Wallancheri near Kutipuram, Pattambi, for business reasons.
Conventional signs as in Table 3; vil. = village.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kammalans

595*
601

Kammalans
Kolla-kurups

428 564 and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

427 The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

*595 564 Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise [305] [284] it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

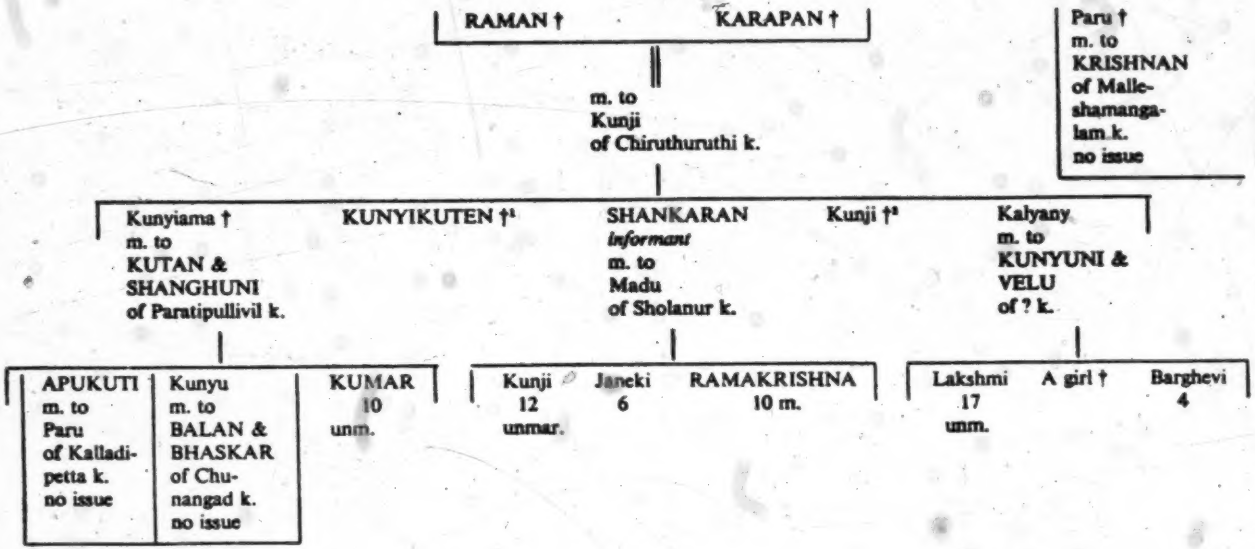
361 On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. 342 [487] We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated [351] piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

*595 There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, [291] Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[Text continues on p. 206]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kolla Kurups
595*
601

TABLE 15. GENEALOGY OF KALAPPURAM *Kalarikel.*


RAMAN †
KARAPAN †
m. to Kunji of Chiruthuruthi k.
Paru † m. to KRISHNAN of Malleshamangalam k. no issue
Kunyiama † m. to KUTAN & SHANGHUNI of Paratipullivil k.
KUNYIKUTEN †¹
SHANKARAN *informant* m. to Madu of Sholanur k.
Kunji †²
Kalyany m. to KUNYUNI & VELU of ? k.
APUKUTI m. to Paru of Kalladipetta k. no issue
Kunyu m. to BALAN & BHASKAR of Chunangad k. no issue
KUMAR 10 unm.
Kunji 12 unmar.
Janeki 6
RAMAKRISHNA 10 m.
Lakshmi 17 unm.
A girl †
Barghevi 4

¹ Died eight years old.

² Died unmarried, aged thirteen.

Conventional signs as in Table 3; k. = *Kalarikel.*

614 564 The name of the household was Palappuram *Kalarikel*. Intrigued that it should have the same name as the neighbouring town, and that a new word instead of *tarawad* should be used, I enquired how this had come about. I was told that the *Kolla-kurups* did not have patrilineal clans of the usual Kerala pattern because they were too few and far apart; instead, they used the name *kalarikel*, which is that of a Nayar armoury for training soldiers, or a "gymnasium". This is in accordance with their profession as masseurs, and in order to distinguish them from each other, they qualified them with the name of the town or village in [428] which they were situated. Otherwise, the same rules of marriage as in the rest of the artisan caste were enforced: the *kalarikels* were patrilineal and exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. There were also *kiriyams* or matrilineal descent groups in which exogamy was observed; Shankaran was even able to give me the name of his, Pal, which meant "white", he told me. I was struck by the resemblance between the *kalarikel* system of the *Kolla-kurups* and that of the "villages" of the *Musaris* whom I had encountered three days before (see p. 202). It was as though this instance of something different from the more usual *tarawads* had acted as a transition between these and the *kalarikels* of the *Kurups* today.

*595 601 I made the family's genealogy, which is given here in Table 15. Shankaran had had two fathers, Raman and Karapan, both dead now, aged fifty four and forty two respectively. His mother was called Kunji, and was still alive, aged seventy. His fathers had had a sister, who died when she was thirty, called Paru and who had married a certain Krishnan of another *kalarikel*, at Malleshamangalam. There had been no issue from the marriage. Of his own generation, only he himself and his sister, Kalyany, were still alive. His eldest sister, Kunyiama, who had been married to two brothers, Kutan and Shanghuni of a *kalarikel* at Paratipullivil, had died when she was forty; her offspring included two boys, one of whom was married, and a girl, married polyandrously to two brothers, Balan and Bhaskar of Chunangad *kalarikel*. Kalyany had two husbands also, Kunyuni and Velu, but I did not manage to record these men's *kalarikel*. (I took a photograph of Kalyany standing [126] at the entrance gate of the compound, with the paddy fields at the back, and another one of the family sitting round Kunji, the informant's twelve year old daughter, and listening to her singing a song; see Figs. 11 and 13.)

*595 427 465 The house in which they all lived (except Kalyany who was only here on a visit to her brother, and lived elsewhere with her husbands), stood on land belonging to a *janmi* called Kollapuri Nayar. They did not pay

Kolla-Kurups
Tol-kollans
Kanisans

any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers 595*
and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an 465
average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular [427]
intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at 564
Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means [282]
literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of [342]
all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on [361]
the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see [304]
Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her [574]
was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said 595*
that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the 564
generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same 564
interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or [791]
astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a [361]
better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called [574]
Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on [115]
and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and 564
that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not 614
have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-

Kanisans
Manans

564 siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no relation
614 between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they
also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the
[428] informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *makkathayam*.

The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections.
*595 The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and
601 his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kangal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki.

The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

*595 Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrologers
[1091] of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art.
Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a
workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in
[429] was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a
year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564 On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house
of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play
[296] an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash
[305] the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar
[535] women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

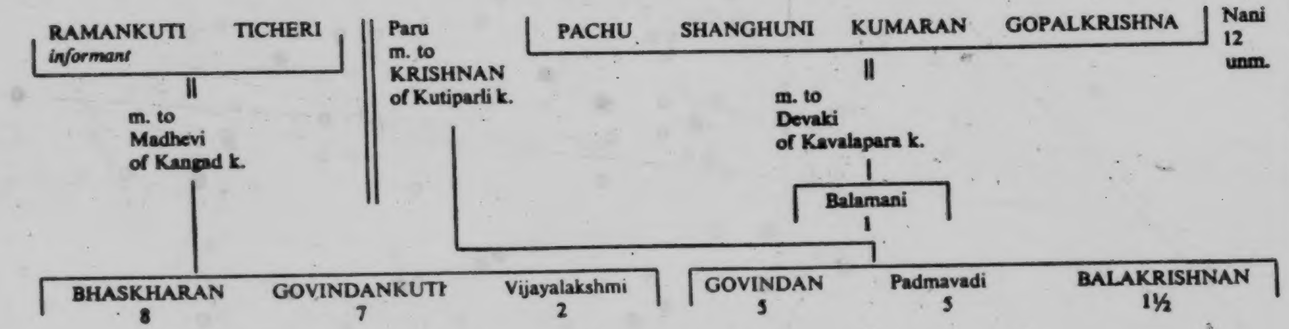
361 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village
351 of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was
a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground,

[Text continues on p. 210]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Kanisans

595*
601

TABLE 16. GENEALOGY OF PELLARMANGALAM *Kalarikel.*


RAMANKUTI
informant
TICHERI
m. to
Madhevi
of Kangad k.
Paru
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Kutiparli k.
PACHU
SHANGHUNI
KUMARAN
GOPALKRISHNA
m. to
Devaki
of Kavalapara k.
Balamani
1
Nani
12
unm.
BHASKHARAN
8
GOVINDANKUTI
7
Vijayalakshmi
2
GOVINDAN
5
Padmavadi
5
BALAKRISHNAN
1½

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

*595 601 [115] It was called Onadi Paramben house, and our informant turned out to be an old lady called Kunji, now married to only one husband, Shanghuni, seventy two, but of whose three other brothers she had once upon a time been the wife also. The genealogy which I made out from what she told me, was an intricate one, and it took a lot of questioning and counterchecking to do. The genealogy is given in Table 17.

From a single, monogamous father were issued four boys and one girl. The latter, Kunji, was today sixty years old and lived, childless, with her husband, Viran, at Mangod village where he came from. The four men, Shanghuni, seventy two, Erechen, sixty five, Raman, sixty and Krishnan who had died at the age of forty five, had all been married, when young, by their father and maternal uncle to the informant, Kunji, when she was twenty five. Three daughters were born from the marriage, of which the second, Lakshmi, only lived three years.

[578] Then Krishnan, the youngest husband, who never took to the marriage properly and was always quarrelling with his brothers, got himself another wife, also called Kunji, today aged fifty three, and with the permission of his former co-husbands, brought her home to live with them all. He was still resident there at the time of his death. He had had four children, of whom two were sons, and who were still in the house with their families. One daughter was married out, and the other, aged twenty and unmarried, lived with her brothers. The informant said that after Krishnan had left the polyandrous marriage, the first Kunji had given birth to another girl called Paru, twenty years old now and unmarried.

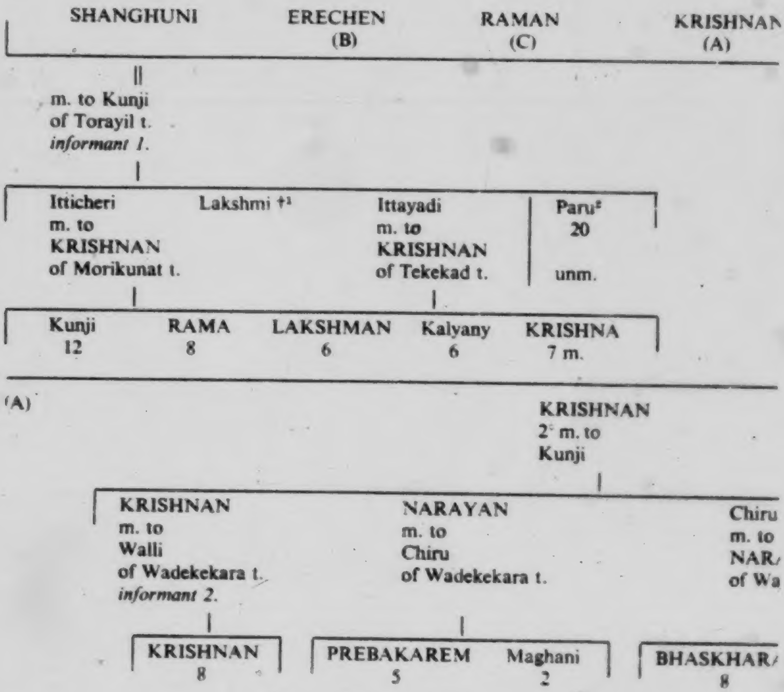
Ten years after they had all been married to Kunji, and therefore five years after Krishnan's defection, Erechen and Raman decided also to secede. Their reason for leaving was the same: there was too much quarrelling in the family. Together, they took Kali of Mangode village, to wife, and brought her home to live with them. Kunyimalu, a girl, was born from this new polyandrous arrangement, and she was now thirty and happily married off to Krishnan of Kutil *tarawad*.

A further split took place just a year later. Erechen and Raman could not agree in the new set-up, and Raman ran away. He took Chiru of Kalapara *tarawad* to wife and went on to live at Karimpuzha as the local washerman. He had a boy and a girl, and was doing well. His wife was still alive, and he was a grandfather five times over. After his departure from the house, Erechen and Kali had further offspring; a son, now aged twenty five and married, and a daughter now aged twenty, still unmarried. They had not stayed in the family house, but had

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Manans

*595
601

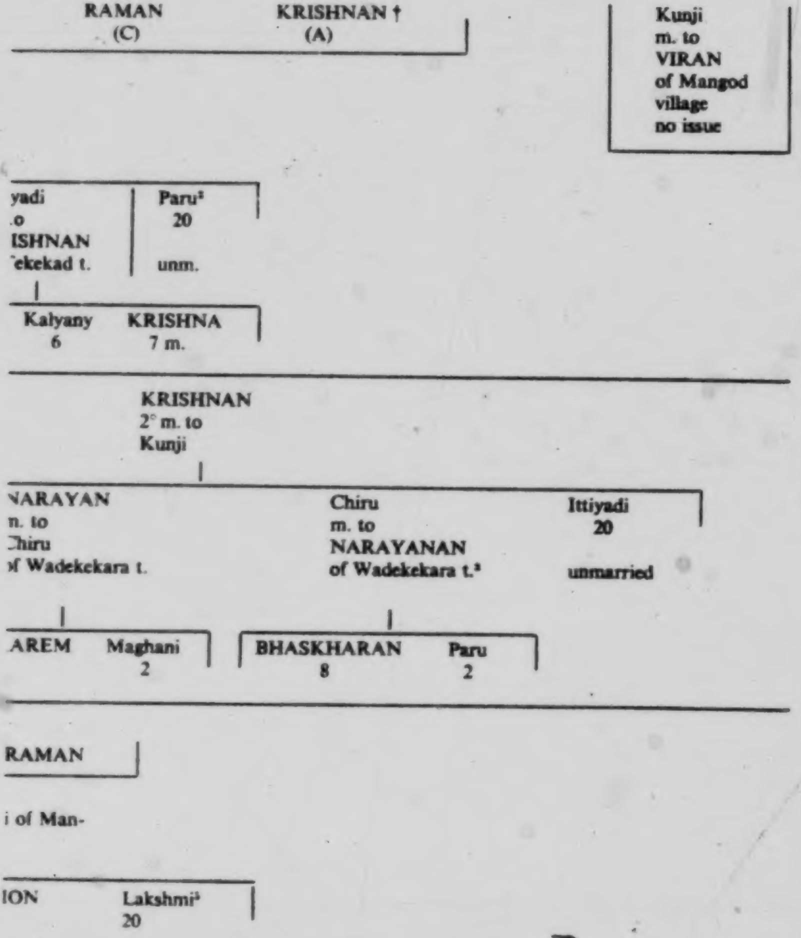
TABLE 17. GENEALOGY OF ONADI PARAMBEN


SHANGHUNI
ERECHEN
(B)
RAMAN
(C)
KRISHNAN
(A)
m. to Kunji
of Torayil t.
informant 1.
Itticheri
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Morikunat t.
Lakshmi †1
Ittayadi
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Tekekad t.
Paru2
20
unm.
Kunji
12
RAMA
8
LAKSHMAN
6
Kalyany
6
KRISHNA
7 m.
(A)
KRISHNAN
2 m. to
Kunji
KRISHNAN
m. to
Walli
of Wadekekara t.
informant 2.
NARAYAN
m. to
Chiru
of Wadekekara t.
Chiru
m. to
NAR
of Wa
KRISHNAN
8
PREBAKAREM
5
Maghani
2
BHASKHAR
8

[Facing P. 210-A]

Manans

* 595 601 EALOGY OF ONADI PARAMBEN HOUSEHOLD.

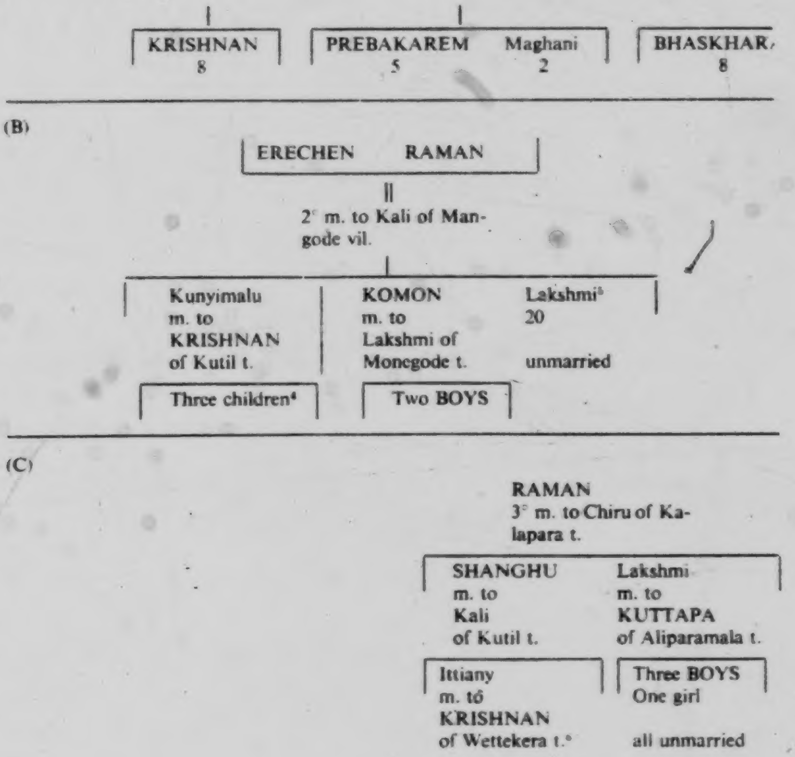

RAMAN
(C)
KRISHNAN †
(A)
Kunji
m. to
VIRAN
of Mangod
village
no issue
yadi
.o
ISHNAN
'ekekad t.
Paru²
20
unm.
Kalyany
6
KRISHNA
7 m.
KRISHNAN
2° m. to
Kunji
NARAYAN
n. to
Chiru
of Wadekekara t.
Chiru
m. to
NARAYANAN
of Wadekekara t.²
Ittiyadi
20
unmarried
AREM
Maghani
2
BHASKHARAN
8
Paru
2
RAMAN
i of Man-
ION
Lakshmi³
20

[facing P. 210-B]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 A W11 Kerala A W11

Manans

+595
601


KRISHNAN
8
PREBAKAREM
5
Maghani
2
BHASKHAR
8
(B)
ERECHEN
RAMAN
2° m. to Kali of Mangode vil.
Kunyimalu m. to KRISHNAN of Kutil t.
KOMON m. to Lakshmi of Monegode t.
Lakshmi⁵ 20 unmarried
Three children⁴
Two BOYS
(C)
RAMAN 3° m. to Chiru of Kalapara t.
SHANGHU m. to Kali of Kutil t.
Lakshmi m. to KUTTAPA of Aliparamala t.
Ittiany m. to KRISHNAN of Wettekera t.⁶
Three BOYS One girl all unmarried

[1] Died aged 3.
[2] Born after Shanghuni and the common wife ~~were left~~ alone.
[3] All brothers and sisters who married brothers and sisters.
[4] Boys or girls not specified.
[5] Komon and Lakshmi born after the departure of Raman.
[6] Divorced the following year.

Conventional signs as in Tables 3, 14 & 15.

[facing p. 210-C]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Manans

*595
601

.AREM Maghani
2

BHASKHARAN 8
Paru 2

RAMAN

ı of Man-

ION
ımi of
:gode t.
wo BOYS

Lakshmi[5]
20
unmarried

RAMAN
3° m. to Chiru of Kalapara t.

SHANGHU
m. to
Kali
of Kutil t.

Lakshmi
m. to
KUTTAPA
of Aliparamala t.

Ittiany
m. to
KRISHNAN
of Wettekera t.[6]

Three BOYS
One girl
all unmarried

were left alone.
s and sisters.

·e of Raman.

[facing p. 210-D]

Manans
Panans

first moved to Mangode village, where Kali came from, for eleven years. 595*
Today they were living at Managhat, where Erechen had found it easier 601
to get work.

As Kunji, my aged informant, was getting tired, we now took on
Krishnan, son of the late Krishnan by his second wife, Kunji (the repetition [115]
of the same names in a family in Kerala is very confusing). He [551]
helped us to check all this material and to correct some inaccuracies
which had crept in. I noticed that in some cases it was impossible to 614
obtain the name of the *tarawad*, and that the name of the village would 564
be given instead. There were, however, no *kalarikels* with the Manans,
I was told. The patrilineal clans were exogamous, as were also the [582]
matrilineal *kiriyams* of these people, although they were not very well
known and practically neglected in present-day marriages. Inheritance [428]
was *makkathayam*, as expected, but I could get no confirmation of the
reported four endogamous subdivisions described in the *Gazeteer of the
Malabar and Anjengo Districts*, p. 130 (see Bibliography).

This Manan family was living on ground belonging to a Nambudri 564
Brahmin *janmi* called Mangala Mana C.M.C. Narayana Nambudripad, 427
but they did not pay him any rent. They were there more as his employees 465
and, in exchange for dwelling space, rendered him the invaluable
services which he needed from them as washermen and barbers.

In the afternoon of the same day of the 25th of November, 1949, 564
upon which I had visited a Thandan household (see above, p. 189), I 791
went to Palappuram to see the family of a *Panan* (exorcist and leaf [293]
umbrella maker).

They lived in a poor but neat and cleanly house, situated in a rather 595*
thickly overgrown grove of the usual Kerala vegetation. On the verandah [342]
of the modest building of dried cow-dung and mud, a bare breasted
woman, Sita, aged forty five, and three boys awaited us. She received
us nicely and spoke quite readily. She seemed resigned to her poverty
and conditions and only complained to us that she was not able to give
the boys more and proper food.

She told us that she lived with the surviving husband of a once polyandrous 595*
union, in which she had been married when she was eighteen 601
to two brothers, Panju, who had died two years after the wedding, at
twenty one, and Korappan, her present forty four year old husband.
She had had a daughter, Kunji, within the first year of her marriage,
and four boys afterwards with Korappan. All the children, including
the twenty six year old eldest girl, were unmarried; she was still breast-feeding
the youngest, two and a half year old Kumaran. This, as I 853

853 could see, was obviously a way of circumventing the difficulty of adequate nourishment, something to which a great majority of the mothers in the vast multitudes of Asia habitually resort.

*595 Father Korappan was away working, and he had taken twelve year
[868] old Krishna with him as an apprentice, so I was not able to photograph
the whole family. But I obtained a picture of Sita with Kumaran at her
[126] breast and Chami and Narayan sitting next to her, which I give here
in Fig. 15. The genealogy is in Table 18.

564 Where *tarawads* were not known, Sita gave me the name of the vil-
614 lage. From what she told me, the clans were patrilineal, inheritance
[428] was *makkathayam*, and exogamy was the rule, also in the *kiriyams*. Her
husband's matrilineal descent group was called Walleananad. The house
*595 was leased as a *kudiyiruppu* for which they paid a yearly rent of twelve
annas to the *janmi*, Eranur Mana Narayan Nambudripad. They had
[429] been fifteen years at this place, and had come from about a furlong
away where they used to reside before. This awakened my curiosity,
and I enquired how this had happened.

Sita told me that her husbands originally lived in the other house, because it was the *tarawad's* headquarters. The name Kundilpadam which it bore meant "low field", and Vellarkaden which was the name of their present house, was just the appellation by which their new dwelling was known. Her husbands' father was the youngest of a pair of brothers, and they had both taken wives to themselves and had not lived in polyandry. Their offspring, her husbands and their father's elder brother's children, had continued to live together, and they, Panju and Korappan, had married first, twenty seven years ago. Then, twelve years later, the cousins had also got married, and, in order to make place for them, Sita and her surviving husband, Korappan, being the junior members, had moved away to another residence, the one where they lived at present.

[601] I made the genealogy of the neighbouring household as the informant gave it to me. It is shown here in Table 19. Two brothers, Panju and Raman, respectively aged forty six and forty, lived polyandrously with a common wife called Cherona, thirty three years old. They had four children, of whom none were married, since they were still too young.

361 On the 21st of November, 1949, I went to Palarmanpalam, a cluster
of houses on the road between Ottappalam and the Lakkidi railway
station, about a mile before the latter is reached. The object of our
564 visit was to see a *Pullavan* household, that is of herbalists and *nag* snake
759 worshippers, a sub-caste associated to the artisans.
771 [TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 214]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Pancins

TABLE 18. GENEALOGY OF VELLARKADEN HOUSEHOLD, KUNDILPADAM *Tarawad.*

595*
601

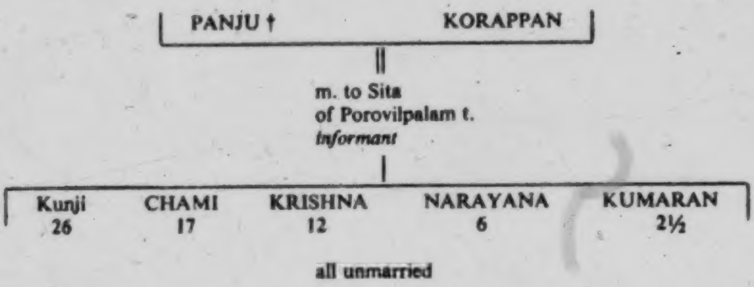
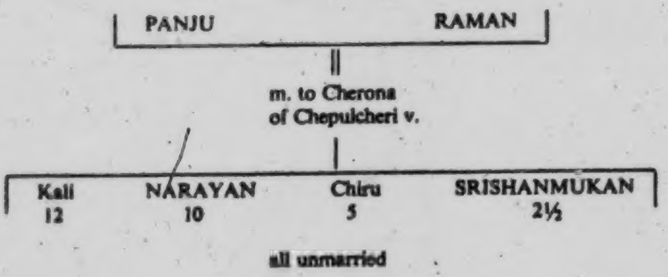

PANJU †
KORAPPAN
m. to Sita
of Porovilpalam t.
informant
Kunji
26
CHAMI
17
KRISHNA
12
NARAYANA
6
KUMARAN
2½
all unmarried

TABLE 19. GENEALOGY OF KUNDILPADAM *Tarawad* AND HOUSEHOLD.


PANJU
RAMAN
m. to Cherona
of Chepulcheri v.
Kali
12
NARAYAN
10
Chiru
5
SRISHANMUKAN
2½
all unmarried

Conventional signs as in Table 3.

Pulluvans

*595 [361] We found the house, which was a small one, in a grove of plantains, surrounded by tapioca fields. A man named Komon, aged twenty nine, met us and took us onto the neat verandah of the building which was constructed in the usual Kerala style. He told us that the name of his household was Putanpunakkil, meaning "new house", and I made out the genealogy of his family, as shown here in Table 20.

*595 601 His elder brother, Raman, aged thirty three, had died recently, he said. He had had two younger sisters too, Chimdevi and Narayani, both of whom were also dead, the eldest at fifteen and the youngest at twelve. He and his elder brother had been married first polyandrously to a woman called Kalyany, for four years. Their father had found her for them, from the village of Churumudacheri. They had had a daughter by her, Ittiyadi, who was now eleven.

Kalyany, it seemed, had never really settled down in polyandry, and had always said that she did not like having two husbands. She wanted to stay alone with the eldest, Raman, but the latter did not accept. As he persisted in this attitude, in spite of her insistence that she have him all to herself, she eventually ran away, back to her parents' home, leaving the daughter with the brothers. That was seven years ago, and their father had immediately provided them with another wife, Kunji, from Manar village. She was twenty at the time, and had been married earlier, at the age of fourteen, to two brothers, Velu and Aiyappan of Tirumatankodu village. She did not get on with these two men and wanted to leave them. When Komon's father chose her for him and his brother, she left her married home, and the men, quite exceptionally, allowed her to take away the boy they had had with her, called Paramesuram and who was now aged ten. Kunji herself was now twenty seven years old and she had had three children with her new husbands, two boys and a girl. I could see that she was expecting another child shortly (in two months time, they told me).

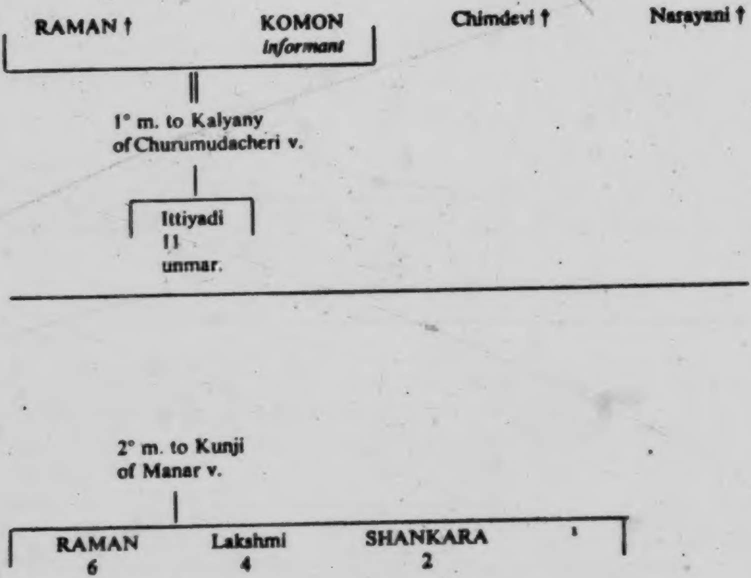
564 614 428 There appeared to be no *tarawads* with these people, and village names were used instead for the patrilineal clans, which were exogamous. There were *kiriyams*, also exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. The sub-caste was reputed to allow marriage of brothers and 564 582 588 114 sisters; the Gazeteer mentions this on p. 133. When I asked Komon about it, he protested that it was calumny and that they had never done such a thing. In my opinion, the reputation wrongly based on insufficient evidence, comes from the fact that these people form a very small group and those persons who are of the same generation use classificatory kinship terms which are apt to make it appear that "sister" mar-

[Text Continues on P. 216]

Pulluvans

TABLE 20. GENEALOGY OF PUTANPUNAKKIL HOUSEHOLD.

595*
601


RAMAN †
KOMON
informant
Chimdevi †
Narayani †
1° m. to Kalyany
of Churumudacheri v.
Ittiyadi
11
unmar.
2° m. to Kunji
of Manar v.
RAMAN
6
Lakshmi
4
SHANKARA
2
1

---

[1] Kunji was expecting seven months at the time of the visit.
Conventional signs as in Tables 3 & 14.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Pulluvans

564
582 ries "brother" but which really refer to someone of another village and
588 *kiriyam.*[1]
114 The Putanpumakkil house stood on ground belonging to a Nayar
427 *janmi*, cousin of the former Secretary of the States Ministry in New Delhi, Sri V. P. Menon, called Wuppala Shankara Narayana Menon. They paid a *kudiyiruppu* rent of one *fanan* (annas four and pies six) yearly. They made their miserable living from plying their traditional
534 trade. To give me a sample of their musical abilities, they offered me a concert on the instruments which they used; those included the famous *Pulluva-kudam*, a sort of stringed instrument cum drum; but I am afraid that the effect was not pleasing to my ears.

162 While carrying out these investigations among polyandrous house-
564 holds in the Walluvanad taluk, I endeavoured to obtain statistics concerning the proportions of the sexes of the two principal polyandrous castes studied, the Thandans and the Kammalans, but they were unob-
[115] tainable. The Tahsildar of the Walluvanad taluk, on instruction from the Collector of Malabar, however, sent me the following letter:

"Tuluk Office, Walluvanad
Perintalmanna, Dt. 9-12-49

Sir,

Statistics of certain populations
Called for – Furnished.
Collector's Ref. W-4-1450/49 dated 4-12-49

As ordered by the Collector's reference cited, the statistics of Izhuvas and Kammalans are not available in the Census records available in this office. The figures now furnished are approximate and are based on local enquiries made by me and my subordinates.

	Male	Female
Thandans (Izuvans)	5100	6100
Kammalans (Karuvans, Thattan, Musari & Assari)	2600	3100

signed
? Menon
Tahsildar
9.12.49"

---

[1] Iyer, in *The Cochin Tribes and Castes* (Vol. I, p. 148, 1909 ed., see Bibliography), says that, with the Pulluvans "nor can a woman allow herself to conjugal servitude to more than one". In view of the above evidence, this pronouncement does not appear to be correct.

Thandans

It would appear, therefore, that, far from there being an excess of men, 589
it is the other way round: there is a shortage of them. What happens [162]
then to the unmarried women? It was even more difficult to answer that question, as only a painstaking and lengthy investigation could do this. I enquired from my guides and interpreters, from those I interviewed, from officials and from fellow anthropologists, and the consensus of opinion, which I also share, is that the spinsters stay at home – with their parents, as long as they live, and with their brothers when the parents have died. The genealogies given above somewhat confirm this view, although perhaps not as decisively as one would like.

C. POLYANDRY IN A THANDAN FAMILY OF THE WALLUVANAD TALUK OF SOUTH MALABAR

While engaged in a general survey of polyandry in Kerala, in the course 595*
of which I came into contact with people of all sorts and conditions, in 114
this complex State, it was not possible for me simultaneously to make 124
a more special study of the distinctive features of the custom. At first, I really only obtained a superficial impression which, with time, I came to look upon as insufficient for me to speak with any authority on the polyandry practised by some of the distinctive castes and sub-castes of this south-west part of India.

Because I wanted to deepen my research and also out of a feeling that the opportunity to gather everything that I could while I was there should not be missed, I decided to choose one family from among those that I had already visited with my guides and interpreters, to put it under scrutiny and study its structure and activity in greater detail. Actually, I would have liked to have chosen one family in each caste or even sub-caste, but I soon realised that this meant work over a period of time far greater than I could possibly hope to have at my disposal in Kerala. So I resigned myself to enquiring where it was thought that I stood the best chance of making such a special study. I was advised to return to the Thandan family which I had first visited on the 25th and 26th of October, immediately after I had started to work in 1949. This family, it will be remembered, was called Appayl Wattakkeh, its *tarawad* had the same name, Appayl, and it was located about two miles outside the village of Ottappalam in the Walluvanad taluk of south Malabar.

The advantages of studying these people were numerous. They were close to where I lived, and to the residence of my interpreters. We had

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*595 114 124 already been to see them twice, and I had become quite well acquainted with them. I had found the two younger men, Panju and Narayana, especially pleasant to talk to and, as they lived in polyandry whereas the rest of the family had given it up, it seemed most appropriate to get to know them better still. Appayl Wattakkeh too, appeared to be one of the few larger and well-to-do Thandan households in the neighbourhood willing to talk about polyandry. I began the special study of this family on the 11th of November, 1949, and went back repeatedly to visit them until my stay in Kerala came to an end in December of the same year.

*595 I have explained earlier (p. 179) how all five brothers of the older generation had been married polyandrously to Devaki; then, when she died, how they had taken Kuniyama to be their new common wife, until Mayadi, the eldest husband, died, Raman became *karanavan* and Shankara broke loose to marry Kodamah, whom his father and mother's brother had found for him. This had seemed to give ideas to the two younger men, Panju and Narayana. Very soon, they too, requested that [584] their maternal uncle provide them with a wife of their own, and they obtained her in the form of Nani, the present thirty five year old mother of their four boys, all born in polyandry.

The interesting thing about these two men was that, although they had not accepted the common wife whom they had previously shared with their elders, they had apparently no objection to polyandry as such, and were quite willing to remain wedded in this way, provided it was limited to them, and to a woman who pleased them both. I was naturally [115] intrigued by this, and did not fail to ask Panju, who became my principal informant (No. 2 in the genealogy, Table 3, facing p. 179), what were his reasons for it. It took a long time to get from him that he was fond of his younger brother and that he had for the latter none of the feelings which he nursed against his elder brothers. Narayana, too, seemed happy with Panju, but there was perhaps more passivity in his case towards his partner than there was in the elder of the two men vis à vis his junior. Why had Nani had accepted the situation was more understandable: born and bred to expect that form of matrimony, she had raised no objection when it had been decided to marry her to the two younger members of the Appayl Wattakkeh household. She was the mistress of her home, too, since her husbands had put themselves up in a smaller house, separate from the rest of the family. She had thus no sister-in-law or mother-in-law to cope with, and seemed very pleased with the arrangement.

Panju and Narayana had taken their share of the two fifths of the 595* common *tarawad* property undivided, as I have explained earlier, and this gave them a relatively more prosperous household in which to live and bring up their children. They were landowners in their own right, and not tenants like most of the Thandans in the area. This enabled them to work in their paddy fields for themselves, and in those of their brothers of the bigger house, and saved them from paying rent or giving part of the crop away to the *janmi* as others had to do.

Accompanied by my interpreters, I spent many hours in the courtyard 124 of the Appayl Wattakkeh farmhouse, watching the work of the men, the domestic chores of the women, and the games of the children. I was obliged occasionally to question them and to press them for answers about situations which I did not have time to watch develop, although I would naturally have much preferred to remain simply a silent onlooker. By preference, I used to go them rather than get them to come to me, for I believed that if I saw them in their own setting, I got to know them better.

It appeared that each time the men of Appayl Wattakkeh had been 583 married (three times in the case of Panju and Narayana, to Devaki, Kuniyama and Nani), there had been the customary arrangement between [584] the two families and a public wedding ceremony. Money had been given to the fathers of the bride by the boy's father and maternal uncle, and cloth to her mother. For Nani, their mother's brother had given her eldest father (she had three) twenty eight *fanans* (or sixteen rupees, fifteen annas), and a piece of cotton material to her mother. In exchange, she had brought with her a dowry which consisted of two hundred rupees worth of jewelry, household brass vessels and two gold sovereigns. This was quite exceptionally good for the Thandan caste, I was told.

In all three marriages, the husbands had lined up with their common 595* bride and drunk coconut milk with her, in the presence of the respective 585 families and their guests. The ceremony had always taken place at the woman's house, and it was only after a few days that she had gone to live with her husbands. This period varied considerably, I heard; in some cases weeks and even months went by without the partners having any sort of marital relations. People were not in a hurry to consumate marriage in Kerala, it seemed.

I had read in Aiyappan's *Iravas and Culture Change*, p. 101, that 595* when one husband was with the common wife, it used to be the custom 114 that he leave his knife etc. on the door frame of the bedroom to signal

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*595 his presence there to the others. I enquired from my informant, Panju, 114 if this were still done. As in the case of other polyandrous people whom I had questioned on this point, he laughed heartily at the idea and said that he had never heard of anything like it. According to him, it was usually the woman who decided with whom she should spend the night; the others then stayed out on the verandah or in another room. Even in the older generation, he did not think that anything remotely resembling the leaving of a knife at the door was ever done.

When I discussed the point with one of the interpreters, he told me that in some polyandrous households that he knew, the husband who did not wish to be disturbed when he was with the common wife would leave his clothes lying about in the neighbouring room or on the verandah as a signal to his brothers. An old Thandan woman confirmed this one day when I met her at Shoranur, where she had come to be interviewed by my wife. She added, however, that there was no fast and firm system and that such things varied "from village to village". It could also be said, I suppose, that they differ from household to household. On the whole, however, there does not seem to be a more developed system of signalling in Kerala than anywhere else.

*595 At home, the obligations of the men consist in making a living for the family in whatever profession or occupation they are engaged. Panju and Narayana cultivate the fields and gather the harvest, often assisting their elder brothers or being helped by them. The wife takes on the [853] household chores, such as cooking and keeping the house clean; she also [462] looks after the children as long as she is suckling them, which may be, in common with other Asiatic mothers, for a very long period – two or [841] three years. The fathers will start attending to their offspring when the woman is isolated during the polluting period of her menses, and thus [783] gradually come to know the children better and to influence their up- [855] bringing. Dominance at home is determined solely by the personality of one of the fathers, and does not follow seniority in age. It is how- [562] ever always a man who is the head of the household, the woman being treated here, as elsewhere among other polyandrous peoples, as the property of the husbands.

Does the woman enjoy living in polyandry and what are her conjugal obligations towards her mates? I put this question to Panju as I had to others whom I had interviewed in other communities. He was of the opinion that it all depends on how she feels towards the men. Devaki and Kuniyama, while being good wives to Mayadi in the first case, and to Raman in the second, had been bad ones to the younger men of the

Thandans

association. That was why Shankara and they themselves later had 595*
sought and obtained wives of their own; mainly because the women "did
not look after them", "did not satisfy them sexually". In principle, a
common wife should not refuse herself to any one of her husbands,
Panju said, but as in all things, excuses and evasions were easy to find,
and the result was that the arrangement did not always work out satisfactorily for some. Nowadays, women had becomes most immoral, the 837
informant complained; they were not at all chaste and had numerous
extra-marital relations, in defiance of what was expected of them in the
homes into which they had been married.

From here we were led to discuss jealousy. Did it exist among them? 595*
And if it did, how did they control it to make polyandry function? I 578
was assured, of course, that it existed; had I not noticed how many 152
polyandrous households were breaking up because of quarrelling? Their
members quarrelled because there was rivalry among the men, jealousy
of each other and a desire to be the sole possessor of the common wife.
Panju agreed that, although there was no jealousy between himself and
Narayana, both of them being liked equally by Nani who distributed
her favours evenly to both of them, there had been much strife and
unpleasantness in the days when they were married to Kuniyama with
their elder brothers (they were too young for that in their first union
with Devaki). That was why they had wanted a wife to themselves and
obtained Nani from their maternal uncle. They got on with each other
and liked working together, hence there was no jealousy between them
and their polyandrous marriage functioned well.

Thandans are, as we have seen, *makkathayam*, and because of this 851
the status of the children is perfectly clear: they are legally the offspring 564
of their fathers and take their family name while inheriting the property 428
from them at their death. They are also, of course, their mother's legal
sons and daughters, but they do not carry on her lineage nor inherit
from her brother as they would do, for instance, in a north Malabar
Tiya *marumakkathayam* union.

With regard to paternity, the children belong to all the fathers collec- 595*
tively, and not to any particular one of them. They are never assigned 851
to the elder father, as is sometimes the case with polyandrous peoples
in other parts of the world. I asked both Panju and Nani if they knew
who was the father of their different sons, and both of them told me
that they "did not care" and that they had "no preference". I insisted
that they could perhaps try to remember what had happened and who
was the woman's partner at the probable date of conception, to calcu-

*595 851 late the time back from the moment of birth; but they only laughed at my insistance and said that they could not. Obviously, the right thing to do was not to make any distinction, to accept the children as collectively theirs, without individual claims on them.

This is the public attitude which self-respecting polyandrous people must apparently take. Privately, things can be quite different, and from the information which I gathered from Panju and Nani, it is obvious that human nature reasserts itself even in this situation, in spite of cultural interdictions. Asked confidentially if he had any preference for one of his four boys, Panju replied that he believed that the two elder ones, Kumaran and Madhavan, were his because they were "more fond" of him than of Narayana. To emphasize this belief, he added that outside people thought that Sridaran and Raghavan resembled their younger father, while the other two were physically more like him. I heard, later, that Nani, in private, never in front of her husbands or even before the other children, would say to Kumaran: "Go on, be a man like your *achan* (father, the name given to Panju). He is a fine fellow whom you should take after!" There seemed to be no doubt that, behind the scenes and the facade which had to be maintained socially in this polyandrous society, a great amount of preference and distinction was shown for the individual, would-be, "real" father.

*595 601 Panju claimed that he looked after the children more than his brother because he had more affection for them than Narayana. Here again, he seemed to be claiming a preferred position that could not fail to strike me. I asked him what names the children used for their fathers, and he gave me not only those for himself and his co-husband, but also (without my asking) for Raman and Sankara, who were considered to be uncles (fathers' brothers) because they were not part of the polyandrous household. Raman was called *wariachan*, "big father"; Sankara, *wawuachan*, "sickly father", because he had some kind of chronic stomach ailment (this reminded me of the "opium-eating father" in Ceylon, see p. 149); Panju, *achan*, "father"; and Narayana, *kutiachan* or "small father". In other words, even those brothers of the fathers who were no longer fathers in parental status were called "father", a classificatory term which obviously had no other reality after the break-up of the old association of all the brothers married to a common wife.

597 [428] If a family has no issue, adoption of a child is possible, the latter then having exactly the same status as if it were one's own. The child has, however, to be legally registered with the authorities if it is to be an heir. Cases of such adoptions are extremely rare; my informants

told me that they knew of no instances. They nevertheless seemed alive 597
to such a possibility and readily gave me the above information as theoretically feasible.

Divorce was a stumbling block to my questioning, and I found it dif- 586
ficult to get a clear picture of it from the informants. That divorce does exist, there seemed to be no doubt in their minds. The woman was returned to her parents' house with what remained of her dowry, and a piece of cloth which was handed to her father and mother, if they were alive, or to her brothers if the former were dead. The intention of divorce had to be declared publicly before representatives of both the wife's and the husbands' families. The bride-price could be claimed,
but this is not often done any longer. What happened if a woman wish- 586
ed to divorce rather than the men, was a possibility which they did not 564
seem to be able to visualize. When I asked about it, Panju said it did not happen, and women did not take this initiative. I mentioned the case of the Pulluvan family which I had visited on the 21st of November, and in which Kalyany had not accepted the polyandrous marriage with two brothers and had eventually left them to go back home to her parents (see p. 214). But both Panju and his brother said that this was another caste, and that such things "did not happen with Thandans".

Panju was surprised at the idea which I put to him that, if one of the 595*
husbands in a polyandrous household wished to break away and set up 586
another home for himself with a woman of his choice, divorce from the common wife might be necessary. He insisted that all he had to do was to obtain the consent of his brothers, or, if he needed the help of his mother's brother to get new wife for him, this uncle's approval of his plan. This was not "divorce", he insisted, since the common wife remained in the family with the elder brother or brothers. His outlook appeared to stem, it seemed to me, from the polyandrous concept of the household constituted as such. The common wife was married to the household rather than to the individual men, and even if one of them broke away, the union between the principal and herself was not affected. There could thus be no "divorce", the term being reserved for the break-up of the latter marriage, which would be a much more serious occurrence.

But what then of the property? If the deserting husband took a portion of it away for himself, did that not make it look more like a divorce from the wife shared in common? And what about the children? With whom did they remain in the case of a real divorce, such as we had first spoken about?

Thandans

*595 586 Panju and my interpreters agreed that even if a seceding husband took part of the family property away to found a new home of his own, no procedure of divorce was needed from the principal part, from the holders of the remaining main section, the other husbands and the common wife. He just left with the consent of the others, and to all practical purposes was henceforward considered as separated from the common spouse, without the formalities of a public divorce. It was a detachment from the family household, agreed to by the community of husbands, and the man was as free to remarry as if he had been given formal permission to do so. Nobody outside or within the kin circle could possibly object.

With regard to the fate of children involved in a regular divorce of their parents in a polyandrous household, Panju and my interpreters were prepared to reply only to questions concerning the divorce of a common wife by her husbands. The case of a woman leaving her husbands simply appeared too unreal and fantastic for them to imagine. As to the departure of one of the husbands to found another family, since there was no divorce properly speaking, the situation was plain: the children were those of the community of himself and his brothers and they therefore remained with the principal, usually with the elder brother, if all the others had decided to leave, one by one. This was the case of the family under study, Nani and Raman junior having remained with Raman senior at the death of Mayadi until Nani was married away. Krishna, Janeki, Karthiyani and Madivi stayed in the large house with the present *karanavan*, Raman senior, but then they were born after the remarriage of Sankara and the departure of Panju and Narayana. If they had been born before these events, however, the position would have been exactly the same, and they would have been left behind with Raman senior and Kuniyama; neither Sankara nor Panju and Narayana would have had any claims on them at all.

Should a woman be divorced by her husbands – a rare occurrence, both my informant and my interpreters assured me – she would be obliged to leave behind all the children whom she had had with them. The only exception to this rule would be if they were too small to be separated from their mother, who might still be suckling them. In that case she would be allowed to take them away temporarily until they were weaned, and then they would have to be returned to their fathers. They were the heirs of the household and, even if there were girls among them, they belonged to it in accordance with the *makkathayam* rule, and there could therefore be no question of them remaining with the mother.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Thandans

This no doubt acted as a strong incentive for women not to create a situation which might lead to such unpleasantness, and contributed greatly in forcing the wife to conform to the rules of polyandry in what concerned her. 575*

Were there any illegitimate children in the Thandan community, and what was their fate if there were? I was assured that they would be considered bastards and outcast. It was also said that the man responsible for them might be forced to support them on complaint of the woman to the Collector. This was the only information that I was able to elicit concerning such cases, Panju declining any knowledge of them. The interpreter made it clear, however, that he was only thinking of the case of an unmarried mother. Should she have a child in wedlock from someone other than her husbands, it would be very difficult to prove adultery and the child would certainly be considered legitimate and that of the husbands. It was up to them to decide what they would do with their unfaithful spouse, should they be able to prove her misconduct. Actually, there were no illegitimate children to speak of in the area, my interpreter assured me. An unmarried girl expecting a child would most certainly find a young man or young men to take her to wife, and apart from gossip, nothing serious would come of it. He knew of a few cases like this, he told me, but he preferred not to give me further details, nor let me see them. He had mentioned a woman who had complained to the authorities in such a case, since this had actually happened recently. It was, however, a modern development which did not conform to the traditional patterns of Kerala Thandan culture. 848 [851] [837]

I enquired also about prostitution, and was told that this did exist to some extent in the Thandan caste and in other, higher castes. The last war, with its influx of soldiers from outside, was held responsible for this state of affairs, but also the presence of European planters and administrators. There was little venereal disease, although the authority upon which I was told this was not definitive. It did not seem to me very convincing, coming as it did just after the statement concerning the causes of prostitution in the State. 548 164

Birth control was not practised since it was contrary to Hindu religious convictions. Abortions were rare, and it could be seen that the population was increasing steadily and unchecked. There was no female infanticide, and both my informant and my interpreter seemed surprised that I should ask if there were. Women were highly valued in Kerala, they said, and there was no reason not to want them. 842 849 [562]

Feeling that I would obtain more detailed information concerning the 000

124 Feeling That I would obtain more detailed information concerning The children from Nani than from Panju or his brother, Narayana, I proposed one day to interrogate her rather than her husbands. After some initial difficulties, the principal one being that men did not like to let her out of their sight, I did, nevertheless, manage to interview her in the yard of the Appayl Wattakkeh household. Even then, I could see that Panju was uneasy about it. I noticed that all the time he was apparently playing with his favourite son, Kumaran, he cast suspicious and displeased glances in our direction, and attempted to overhear what one of the intrepreters was saying. The other volunteered to help, and took to talking with Panju during these interviews, in order to entertain him and keep him occupied elsewhere. But this was never entirely successful and it was obvious that Panju fundamentally disapproved of my speaking to his wife directly instead of through his or Narayana's intermediary.

I have already remarked how much more pleasant and rewarding I had found it to question the women of Kerala rather than their menfolk. Nani was no exception, and she proved to be much more intelligent and willing in her answers than Panju ever was. Perhaps an explanation of her husband's distaste for my speaking directly to her is to be found in this: he vaguely feared that she would tell me things which she "ought not to", and which he confusedly thought wrong to let me have. Narayana was the same, and although he, too, pretended to play with young Sridaran, it was only an excuse, I think, to remain in the courtyard, to watch us and try and overhear what was being said.

862 Nani was still suckling the two year old Raghavan, her last child. I asked her when and how she would wean it, and she answered that she would do so when she would be two months pregnant again. She
[278] would then apply *nux vomica* to her breast nipples and the bitter taste would make the child stop wanting her milk. She said that she obtained the product in the bazaar as a pharmaceutical drug, not as a natural product of the country. Some children were not put off by this method, she added, and for Kumaran she had had to put chicken dung on her nipples and tell him what it was that he was about to eat. In other cases, some mothers beat their children till they stop suckling, but Nani did not like to do this, although she knew that others did.

291 Loin cloths were not put on children until they were in their third
[855] year. Before that they were allowed to run about naked. In Nani's opinion, they began to realise that there was a difference of sex only
[864] when they were five. (This appeared to me to be somewhat in contradiction with the fact that children received their first clothes two years

earlier, but I give the information here as it was recorded by me at the time from the informant's statement.) 291 864

In spite of a child being fed at the breast very late, the habit of sucking a jump or a finger existed in Kerala as much as it does with us. 853 Nani said that mothers did try to stop it, telling the child that it is bad, and threatening punishment should it persist. There were no substitutes given, such as rubber teats, and the habit was the natural derivative of breast suckling. When the children had teeth, they used them freely when feeding, and also pulled and scratched the breast with their hands. Boys and girls behaved similarly in this respect and she could notice no difference due to sex between them.

Diapers made of cotton cloth in which the child was wrapped were 863 used for the first year and a half. Then the baby was taught the rudiments of sanitation and shown where and how to go. [854] The mother was almost exclusively in charge of teaching the child this, but sometimes in exceptional circumstances (when she was in the polluting period of her menses), the father, the one most fond of the children, would take the task upon himself. Should the baby forget itself or disobey what it had been told, it would be beaten with a twig over the buttocks or [861] threatened that it would be carried away by a madman or a cat or a dog.

Children slept together on the same mat on the floor of the house 865 until the age of twelve. Aggression between them was quite marked at [513] an early age, and Nani had already told me how the infants with teeth treated her when feeding. A new-born child caused the development of much jealousy among the elder children and they bit and scratched at this time even more than usual. Sridaran was the worst in this way of the four children she had had, and he was still the most aggressive of them all. He often threatened to drive his mother out onto the road and back to the house from whence she came, and accompanied his threats with kicks. He never dared, however, to say such things to his fathers, and showed a marked preference for Narayana, corresponding in this to what Panju had told me about presumed physiological paternity. He seemed to resent any interference from his elder father, especially when the latter insisted on his going to school. He had been known to refuse point blank to go there.

Raghavan, although very young and quieter now, was pretty bad, too, in the way that he fought, bit and scratched his mother. He was late in walking and talking and had really only just learned to do these things. [856] Madhavan spoke very early, earlier than all of them; at the age of five months, he could already make himself understood with words. Nani

865 told me that she had had no experience with girls as she had only had boys, but that friends of hers who had had them, said that they are quieter and easier to manage.

864 [595] Boys were much worse when it came to early masturbation. This began at the age of two with them, and they seemed to delight in playing with themselves when sitting in the sand or dust. Nani told her own children that they must not do this, because it would make them sick, and it was always her and not Panju or Narayana who dealt with this matter. She noticed too, that her little boys, when suckling, would sometimes get an erection, whereupon she would beat their fingers away from themselves with a small twig. She had threatened them with castration, too, but she complained that this did not seem to have the slightest effect on them.

155 595 I enquired if Nani had noticed any preference in her boys for herself and any marked animosity and fear for their fathers or one of the fathers, at an early age. I asked her too, if, in other families where there were girls, these did not show a partiality towards their male parents. She replied that it was quite apparent that girls as well as boys preferred the mother to the fathers. As far as she was concerned, she thought that both boys and girls were more drawn to the mother than to the fathers because it was the mother who looked after them from an early age. It was, of course, impossible for me to look more deeply than this into the question of Oedipean inclinations as I had neither the time nor the opportunity to make a proper research into the matter.

864 [595] I was interested to learn that it was Nani who threatened her boys with castration when they masturbated, and neither Panju nor Narayana. What happened in the case of girls in other families, then? Nani said that they were told that they would have their genital organs pinched, and this was sometimes actually done, hard, so as to hurt. Here, I insidiously asked whether the little girls ever felt that they were castrated by comparison to the little boys, but the only effect of my question was to make them all laugh heartily – Panju and Narayana, who were eavesdropping just beyond us in the courtyard, as well.

Upon another day, while persevering in my attempts to find out about the early development of Thandan children living in polyandry, I asked if Nani had noticed a period of calm in which the children ceased masturbating and seemed no longer to take any interest in sexual matters. She took this seriously and replied yes, that she had noticed such a lull. Between the ages of four and thirteen, they were very quiet, with only brief, temporary interruptions. At the end of this time, boys and girls

Thandans

864 were definitely separated from each other, but they were already themselves shy in each other's presence, and tended to keep apart. I was surprised to hear the informant mention so long a period of latency, beginning too so early, but of course, what she said should not be taken too literally, there being a strong possibility that she was either mistaken or that she was giving me the information which she thought I would like to hear. She was also the sole source of what I learned in these matters, and I did not have an opportunity to check up on what I heard with any other woman. Still, I find what she told me to be worth mentioning, because it may be that, after all, children in Kerala do have a relatively longer period of latency than was to be expected in such a community.

836 124 564 [177] I enquired about pre-nuptial sexual relations, but the informants, Nani and Panju, assured me that no such things existed. On the contraty, they said, virginity was very highly praised, not only in a girl but also in a boy. Here again, I have my doubts as to the accuracy of this reply, suspecting a knowledge of European ideals in such matters, especially those of the Victorian era. Since much that is British in India today still reflects this period, this may have influenced them to give me such an answer. It was added, however, that other, higher castes, such as Nayars, had no such prejudices, and because of this I have wondered if the information did not take the form that it did out of a desire to praise Thandans and show them up in a favourable light in comparison with Nayars. It was probably a combination of both that prompted them to take this attitude: they wanted to make out that their caste conformed to European standards in what concerned pre-marital sexual relations and was therefore superior to that of the Nayars, their immediate rivals.

833 564 I enquired privately, one day, what was the position adopted in coitus by this community. I was told that, contrary to what happened in higher castes where the man lay below the woman, with Thandans the man was always above. The contrary "was not favourable to the procreation of warriors", a strange remark I thought, considering that it was the Nayars who, in olden days, constituted the martial class. I had already heard about this particular way in which some castes in Malabar were reputed to have sexual intercourse, when I was working with the Todas in the Nilgiris during the summer of 1949. I will be giving an account of it in the chapter about these people.

838 564 177 The only point which my interpreter was willing to concede to the higher castes was that they were less inclined to homosexuality than the

838 Thandans. With the latter, a lot of men were known for their proclivi-
564 ties of this sort, and they were nearly as bad as the Moplas, I was told.
177 The latter were very much addicted to sodomy, but then it was part of
their culture, and had been acquired with Islam from the Arabs.

833 There was no impotence or frigidity in Kerala, not with any caste, I
564 heard. People were far from "cold" and passion, rather, was the rule. I was given a long description of the consummate art with which the higher castes indulged in amorous pleasures and assured that the lower castes had only learned from them. It seemed, however, that the Thandans could never hope to excel in these matters, especially the women who were still far from being the "angels" which those of their superiors undoubtedly were.

674 Asked about crime, neurosis, and insanity, my interpreters said that, to their knowledge, there was little of these in the area. As only recently, since my arrival in Shoranur, a Thandan woman had assassinated her husband, I remarked on the circumstance and asked them how they reconciled it to their statement. They replied that it was an exceptional event, and that for a long time previously, nothing of the sort had hap-
[181] pened. People, on the whole, were docile and not aggressive. They did not even indulge in poisoning, which occurred quite frequently in other
158 parts of the country. Again, insanity seemed to be restricted to the
755 Moplas, who, apart from occasionally running amok as is well known, had members of their community frequently tied up in a mosque or to iron stakes, in the hope that they could thus be cured.

D. POLYANDRY AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN KERALA

177 Unquestionably, polyandry no longer thrives as it did in Kerala and
[595] research into what changes have brought about this situation over the last two hundred years cannot fail to be of interest. I myself, having returned to the area after an absence of ten years, was able to notice many alterations, although these were not sufficient to warrant any
[114] specific consideration. Dr A. Aiyappan, Superintendent, Government Museum, Madras, has made a particular study of the Irava community, and in his publications on this subject, and on the more special aspect of polyandry in other castes of Malabar, has shown what factors are involved and how foreign contact has undermined the old culture and is bringing a new one into existence. Readers are referred to his books
[127] and articles listed in the Bibliography. I give here a brief outline of his

conclusions, to which I may add those observations of mine in the field 177
that appear to me to bear out his contentions most fully. [127]

In 1792, after the defeat of Tipu Sultan of Mysore by the British, the latter took over the direct administration of Malabar. As we have [648]
seen, they began by farming out the collection of revenue to the local rajas; very soon, however, they found this system unsatisfactory and took over the task themselves. A corps of British administrators was formed and put in charge of the work; from then onwards, cultural conditions in Kerala underwent a very great change.

The term "Europeanism" has been used to cover all those aspects of Western foreign influence which have since then profoundly affected the local people's lives. This foreign influence has been followed since 1947 by recent reforms due to the policy of the present Congress Party Government of India, although these, too, have been inspired to a large extent by contact with the West. Today, a new force is making itself
felt. Since the last elections in 1957, Kerala has been ruled by a govern- [665]
ment of the Communist Party, whose accession to power is, however, too recent for me to be able to give here any appreciation of the alterations it is seeking to impose on the State.

"Europeanism" includes many varied and subtle innovations in the everyday life of the inhabitants of Kerala, some of which can be put down as gains and some of which, on the contrary, must be considered as losses. Aiyappan has attempted to establish a balance sheet of these for the Irava community (to be found on p. 126 of his book *Iravas and Culture Change*). As far as the whole of the Kerala population is concerned, it can be said that the term mainly covers such principal items as the following.

First of all, the displacement of traditional rulers and their replace- 177
ment by European officials. This took place throughout the area, and 631
only the maharajas of Cochin and of Travancore were retained; later, a resident responsible to the Madras government was attached to them. The new officials were scant respecters of caste. While obliged, by force of circumstance, to take into consideration the innumerable compartments into which native society was divided and subdivided, they nevertheless were inspired, in their dealings with the people and in their choice of assistants, by the Christian ideals of equality and individual merit, whereby they brought about a revolution in traditional methods
of government. Only Islam, with the arrival of the Arab traders on the 177
Malabar coast nearly one thousand years before, can be said to have 797
brought anything similar to bear on the static outlook of the people;

177 797 but then this influence made itself felt rather by conversions and personal dealings than by any direct, government action, as now.

Transport, which in Kerala had always been difficult, was also greatly 177 489 changed. Modern facilities, such as good roads, ferries, bridges; later, motor cars, railways, engine-driven ships, boats and launches; and finally, aeroplanes, have put thousands of boatmen and cartmen out of work and have not only brought formerly isolated and inaccessible parts of the country into contact with the rest, but have also made important centres become within easy and rapid reach of each other. As in other [564] parts of the world where it is impossible for race distinctions to be observed in a system of general transport, caste is overlooked in public transport in Kerala, and this fact has greatly contributed to breaking down traditional socio-religious pre-occupations in such matters.

With the institution of a regular method of dispensing justice through 177 564 courts, caste was dealt a further blow; the European masters of India refused to treat individuals otherwise than as equals before the law. The [693] judiciary personnel was recruited from all sections of the population, regardless of caste or creed. This measure, together with the new way in which government servants were enlisted, gave the more enlightened castes of Nayars and Tiyas their chance. The present eminence in public affairs which these two communities have attained is in a large measure due to the opportunities thus thrown open to them.

Education, of course, also had a lot to do with it. Instead of the old 177 871 kind in which village teachers taught native lore and traditions in an unchanging, ageless fashion, European-type schools were opened and modern means of education became available to all who wished to take advantage of them. These methods may be criticised today, since independance in 1947, as being un-Indian and useless in the context of the national culture, but the fact remains that they brought great changes in the outlook of the people, especially among the middle classes, who have indisputably benefitted from them.

Liberal, learned professions began to be followed by many to whom 177 463 564 such careers were not open before, and again, regardless of caste distinctions, lawyers, doctors and teachers appeared in large numbers in Kerala. Many of them soon travelled to other parts of India, where their reputation as able and knowledgeable practitioners has never ceased to grow. A large part of the Government of India's New Delhi office personnel is made up of men from Kerala, in both high and subordinate positions, especially Nayars, so much so, indeed, that the fact has become the subject of a standing joke.

"Europeanism" further enhanced its influence in Malabar with the 177
introduction of new industries and capitalistic enterprise. The coconut, 438
cashew nut and coir industries employ thousands today and have created amongst the people an even greater dependence on the fluctuations of world prices than in the days of the pepper trade. Weaving, tile factories (such as the one founded by the Basel Mission), saw-mills, match factories and metal industries have given many people a new outlook on life which they could never have had in the old days, and has
profoundly changed their traditional concepts. Prohibition introduced by [656]
the Congress Party Government, with its consequent forbidding of the [293]
ancient profession of toddy tapping, has thrown many Tiyas out of [564]
work, obliging them to seek their livelihood elsewhere, and modifying for this reason the traditional structure of their economy and family life.

Greater and better medical facilities, as well as a growth in industrial 177
productivity, have brought about a correspondingly sharp rise in the 433
population, so much so, indeed, that today Kerala ranks first in density [161]
to the square mile out of the whole of India. Agricultural prosperity has unfortunately not kept pace with this advance, making it often difficult for everyone to obtain food, especially when the monsoon fails,
as it often does in the latter part of the year. Foodstuffs, especially [439]
grain, have thus to be imported from outside, and when this is not [464]
sufficient, many seek work in other parts of the world, leaving their [167]
families for years at a time, to emigrate and hire themselves out as labourers in Ceylon, Singapore, and the Malay Federation.

It is not surprising, under the circumstances, that the old order in 177
Kerala has crumbled. Of the rajas and maharajas of old, none are any 631
longer in positions of responsibility, those of Cochin and Travancore having also been made destitute by the recent re-arrangement of States
in India. The Nambudri Brahmins are, perhaps, those who, because of 177
their priestly character, continue more than anyone else, to lead the 564
ancient, traditional life. Many of them, however, have gone in for the [491]
new enterprises, and if they do not always themselves own and direct them, they have invested funds in them. The younger members of the *illams* appear to be increasingly dissatisfied with their lot, and do not seem prepared to accept the old imperatives of occupation and succes-
sion. It may not, after all be just a coincidence that the Communist [665]
Party Government now in power in Kerala is headed by a Nambudri Brahmin.

The Nayar caste is no doubt the one that has been the hardest hit by the sweeping changes brought about by altered conditions. But its

177 564 members have been the ablest of all in adapting themselves and in taking advantage of the new opportunities which the Europeans brought. To them have gone the best and most rewarding jobs both in and out of the administration, positions of trust and responsibility to which their long training as soldiers and managers of the upper castes in Kerala had possibly prepared them. I was astonished to find how many well-known names in present-day India still have their homes and families in Ottappalam of the Walluvanad taluk.

It has already been said how very much the Tiyas, everywhere in Kerala, have progressed, and how they, too, have taken enormous advantage of changed circumstances, especially education, to become today one of the most progressive communities in the State. Aiyappan's book is witness to this. Perhaps only the lower castes, such as Kammalans, other artisans, Cherumas, Pulayas, aboriginals and the poorer section of the Mopla Islamic community, have remained as they always were, and have shown no signs of taking advantage of the benefits brought in by foreign rule. It is not to be excluded, however, that it may be precisely for them that the new Communist government will legislate, especially for the landless agricultural labourers – but it is too early to say anything about this yet.[1]

177 564 595 Following closely upon the replacement of the old order by a new one, polyandry, too, has crumbled in Kerala. The Nayars, whose non-fraternal polyandrous customs so forcibly struck the early Portuguese and other European travellers, have ceased to practise polyandry, at least in the pristine form in which it was described by the ancient writers. Since this polyandry appears to have been closely correlated with the military organization of the Sudra militiamen of the local rajas and chieftains, it was perhaps to be expected that, when the latter disappeared, the custom of non-fraternal polyandrous marriage went with 828 it. Particularly as men living in a *marumakkathayam* system of inheritance seem to suffer greatly from the fact that they can leave nothing to their children, but only to those of their sisters. In a conversation that I had with His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin, at Ernakulam on the 18th of April, 1949, he told me that it was "un-natural" for a man not to be able to provide for his own children, and that, in his opinion, the custom could not survive much longer for this reason.

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423 427 [1] A step has been taken in this direction with *The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill 1957* which introduces comprehensive land reforms, including the right of "permanent tenants" to purchase land held by them, a ceiling on land holdings and fixation of fair rents.

There appears to be no doubt that Thandans and Tiyas (Thiyyas) of 177 564 595 the central area are gradually giving up polyandry. Others have reported on the speed with which it is disappearing, sometimes exaggerating the rapidity, it seems to me, but nevertheless correctly stating that not many more years will pass before the custom has become simply a memory, as it is with the Nayars. I think a distinction should be made, however, between the more wealthy, upper members of the caste and the lower, poorer ones. In fact, polyandry with the Thandans and Tiyas is being abandoned from the top, and this observation is valid not only for their community, but also for polyandry in general in Kerala.

It is the upper castes, who have had greater opportunity to educate themselves, adapt themselves to higher standards and lead a more modern, Europeanized type of life, who are giving it up as something primitive and unworthy of self-respecting citizens. Within the castes, however, it is not always the upper strata that has progressed in this way, as can be seen with the Nayars, where polyandry is reputed to be practised still in the conservative court circles of Cochin and Travancore. Among the Thandans and Tiyans it is the other way round, the upper class either professes not to follow the custom any longer or really abstains from doing so. The Kammalans and associated artisans nearly all continue to be polyandrous, and as they are without exception people of very slender means, a distinction such as the one made here does not apply.

Aiyappan, discussing new trends in the Irava community, has written: 177 595 463 "Differences in occupations and income and the development of new sexual standards are two active forces that one sees in operation against polyandry." (*Iravas and Culture Change*, p. 103.) Iravas, according to him, had formerly very few avocations from which to choose. They pooled their resources and worked for the house, their common wife and their children, without making any individual reservations. Today, matters have changed and the men each want a different type of work, chosen from among the numerous new occupations which are open to them, and aspire to have their own family, wife and children. The old 177 595 [152) ways are no longer fashionable, and are even despised and considered to be primitive and barbarous. Jealousy thus reappears, and asserts itself in no uncertain way. The women, too, do not want to be shared any longer by a number of brothers, and prefer to return home or refuse polyandrous marriages rather than be joined in wedlock in the traditional manner. In North Cochin, however, it was the progress of the people in higher levels of the Thiyya caste that brought about a legal inter-

177 diction of polyandry. (For a synopsis of the Act of 1940, see p. 238 ff.)

595 While travelling round with my guides and interpreters in 1949, I had ample opportunity to hear what the polyandrous families were thinking about the ancient form of matrimony which was beginning to be despised. Here are some of the remarks which were made to me in the course of my interviews:

177 564 595 Raman, the informant of the Appayl Wattakkeh household, said that if only twenty five per cent of two hundred and fifty Thandan families in the Walluvanad taluk still practised polyandry today, it was because the Moplas, Nayars and Brahmins ridiculed the practice as low-caste and primitive. The Thandans wanted to reform themselves and aspired to higher things, therefore they had to give up polyandry as representing something backward.

Velu, informant of the Kereghetil household of the Katukulangara *tarawad*, told me that as long as the property was undivided, they practised polyandry, as it kept them from having many wives in whose quarrels they might become involved and thus break with each other. But now, as each man wanted to go his way, things were different, and polyandry was no longer possible.

It will be remembered that, on the 2nd of November, 1949, I attempted to visit a rich Tiya household near Kunnamkulam in north Cochin, only to be put off by an old man, accompanied by a younger one, who assured me that no one was polyandrous in their family any more. When I went on to a poor labourer's house nearby, I was told that this was not true. There were three brothers in the older generation (one of whom was the elder of the two men to whom we had spoken) and they lived in polyandry, although, being wealthy, they did not like to admit it.

In the Kaladiwalapil household, that of the miserable Tiya labourers next door, in the village of Perumpillav, the informant, Raman, said that the ancient custom by which brothers shared a common wife, and thus avoided the quarrelling among sisters-in-law in which they feared to become embroiled, was changing now because the younger people found it "more convenient" to be monogamous. When I asked him what he meant exactly by this phrase, he replied that "times have changed" and that it is "easier" thus. Not yet satisfied, I insisted on more clarification, whereupon I heard that polyandry is "not done any longer", that it was "out of fashion", and not "modern". Raman was unable to express himself better, and seemed plainly puzzled and embarrassed by my request for a more precise explanation.

I obtained the same kind of answer from Panju of the Appayl Wattakkeh household, it will be recalled, when I asked him how it was that his maternal uncle consented to get a new wife for him and his brother, Narayana, when they refused to live any longer in polyandry with Raman and Kuniyama. He said that his mother's brother had certainly begun by resisting the request, but that, in the end, he had given in because "times have changed" and he could not very well force them to remain in their present marriage if they said that they were dissatisfied with it. 177 564 595

It was Panju, too, who gave me the unexpected information that it was "immorality" that was breaking up polyandrous households. Women were not at all chaste any longer, he said, and anybody could have them "for a song". So every man now wanted a wife of his own whom he could control, instead of submitting himself to the old discipline and consenting to remain without complaint in the old polyandrous type of union.

My experience with Kammalans and other artisan castes was different. Polyandry with them is also threatened, but it cannot be said that it has deteriorated to the same extent with them as it has with the higher castes. Jealousy, however, seems to be coming very much to the surface, and I heard many tales of serious quarrelling among the men, leading to separation and to division into splinter households. [578] [152]

Raman, the *Asari* informant of the Perinkulam household, interviewed at Palappuram, said that polyandry was dying out because "Civilization is spreading". When I asked him what he meant by "civilization", he answered, rather simply, that people did not tie up their hair any longer in the typical Malayalam way, a top knot in front over the forehead, and that many had taken to growing moustaches. He added, however, to these very personal criteria of his, that women refused now to be wedded to many men; some wealthier people, he revealed, even go so far as to insert a clause into the marriage contract by which it is stipulated that their daughter will not be given in marriage to more than one man. He concluded by sighing, shrugging his shoulders and exclaiming that it was not right, but what could be done about it?

Kunji, the daughter of old Kurumba of the *Tolkolan* Palakaparampil household near Meitenadeshan, also complained of too much quarrelling among the men of a polyandrous family, and said that because of this, the women did not want to be married in this way any longer. She attributed to these reasons the fact that her household had already given up polyandry in the previous generation.

177 595 Because of the profound cultural changes which have fundamentally modified the social and economic structure of Kerala society, it can be said that polyandry is on the decline in that part of the world. Circumstances no longer favour the marriage of many men to one woman, and the custom is not only being abandoned as useless, but those who, by tradition, should follow it, look upon it with abhorrence and with growing disgust. To those who have practised it so long, as something good and moral, it has become, nowadays, something barbarous, primitive an unworthy of them: times have changed and it simply is not done any longer.

ADDENDUM

671 *Act XVII of 1115, the Cochin Makkathayam Thiyya Act, passed by His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin on the 18th day of Kumbham 1115, corresponding to the 1st day of March 1940.*

C.V. Iyyu, former Member of the legislative Assembly of Cochin State, told me on the 27th of October, 1949, that he was on the Commission which in 1937-38 drafted the Cochin *Makkathayam* Thiyya Act of 1940. The majority of the members of the Commission were Tiyas (Thiyyas) and the initiative of the enactment was due to V. K. Krishnan Kutti, M.L.A., *wakil* of Trichur, himself a Tiya. The Act is thus a Tiya legislative reform and not a foreign one. This would explain the fact that it is observed. I hear that the idea is a result of the education and progress of the Tiya community, which now ranks as one of the most accomplished in Kerala.

Some of the main provisions of the Act are given here below. They are those that concern definition of the name Thiyya, of an heir's sex in doubtful cases, acceptable forms of the marriage solemnity, prohibition of polyandry (art. 12), succession both testamentary and intestate:

Chapter 1. Five articles.

101 564 428 Art. 5, (i): "Thiyya includes Ezhuva, Chova, Billava, Marayan, Thandan and others recognized as such." It adds: "When owing to any physical defect or deformity, it is not possible to ascertain the sex of any of the heirs of an intestate, such heirs shall, for the purpose of this Act, be regarded as female."

Chapter II. Marriage and its Dissolution. Thirteen articles.

585 Art. 6: "Conjugal union may be openly solemnized in any of the following ways:

- a) by the tying of the Mangalya Sutram
- b) by the presentation of cloth to the female by the male
- c) by exchange of rings
- d) by mutual garlanding, and

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[491]

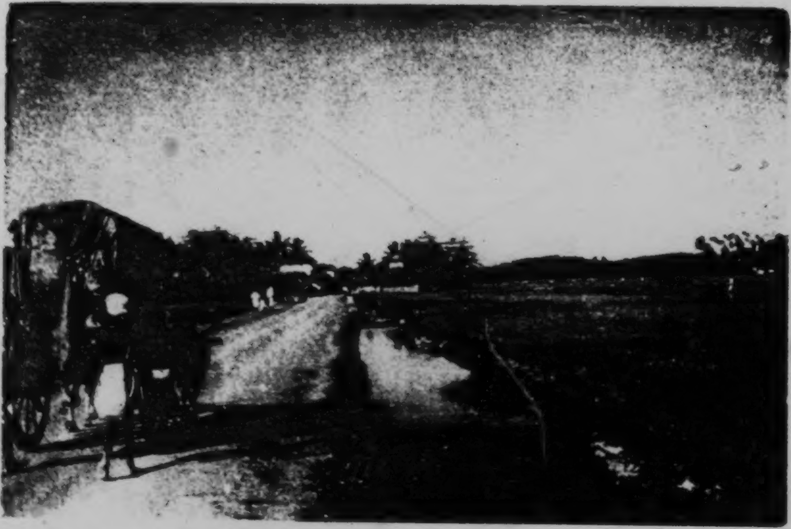

Fig. 5. A typical Kerala landscape: the red laterite dust road passes between green paddy fields; the blue sky is reflected in the water of the irrigation channel by the side of the road.

[1178]

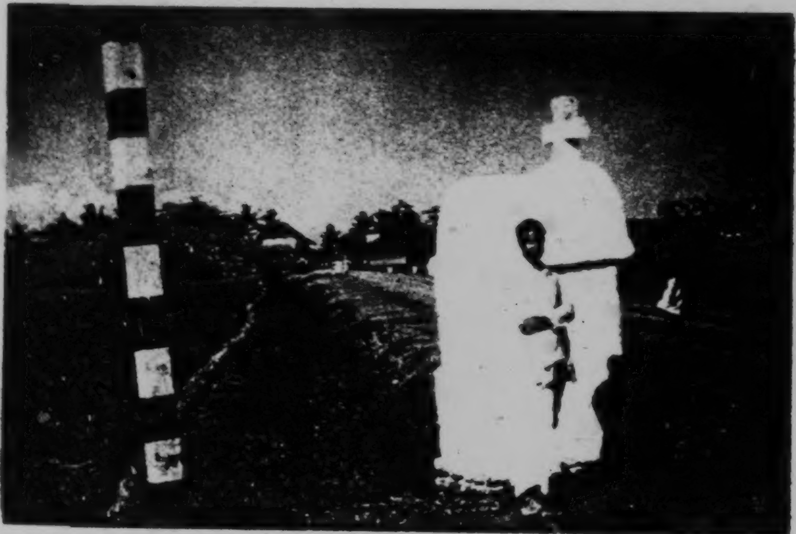

Fig. 6. A Christian shrine at a crossroads in Cochin.

[P.238-A]

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12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 A W11 Kerala A W11
Nayars

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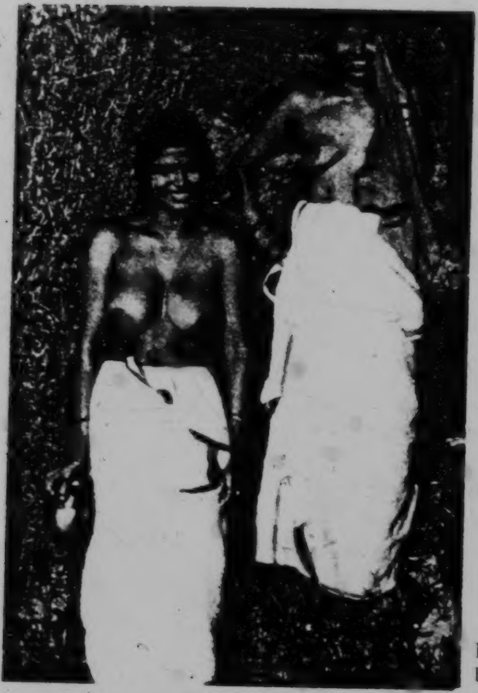
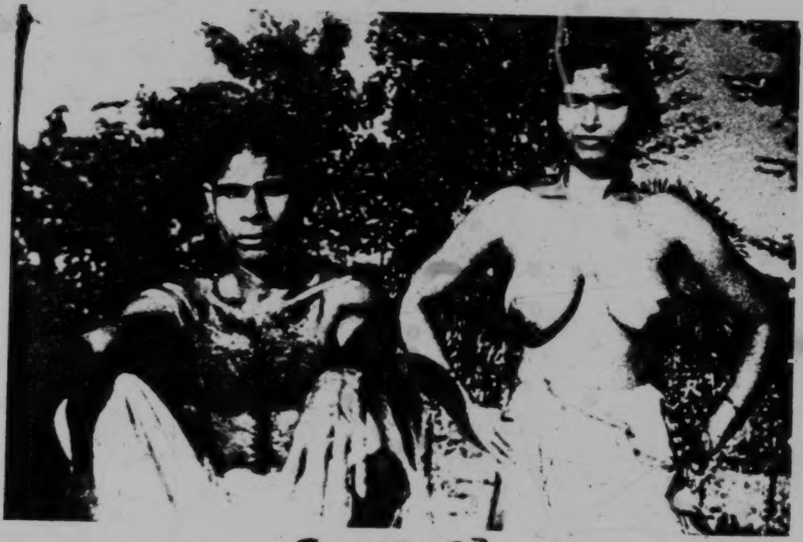


Fig. 7. Parbhatiama, the Nayar woman and her sister Kunyimaluama.

Fig. 8. Kunyimaluama and her brother Krishnanayar.



[P. 238-B]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Thandans
Tiyas

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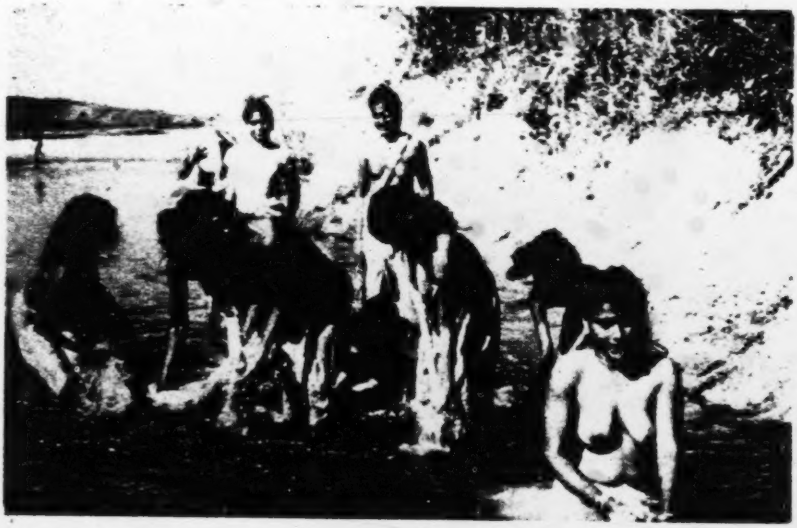

Fig. 9. Thandan women bathing in the Ponani river of south Malabar, near Lakkidi, in the Walluvanad taluk.

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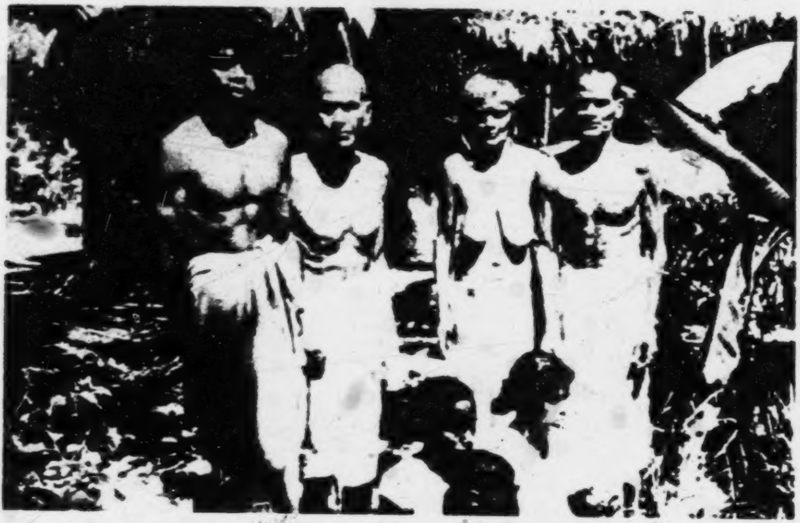

Fig. 10. Kaladiwalapil household of Perumpillav village in north Cochin. From left to right, standing: Kandapan, Mundon, Chaki and Raman; seated in front: Lakshmi, her son and Kunyu.

[P. 238-C]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Kolla-Kurups
Kammalans

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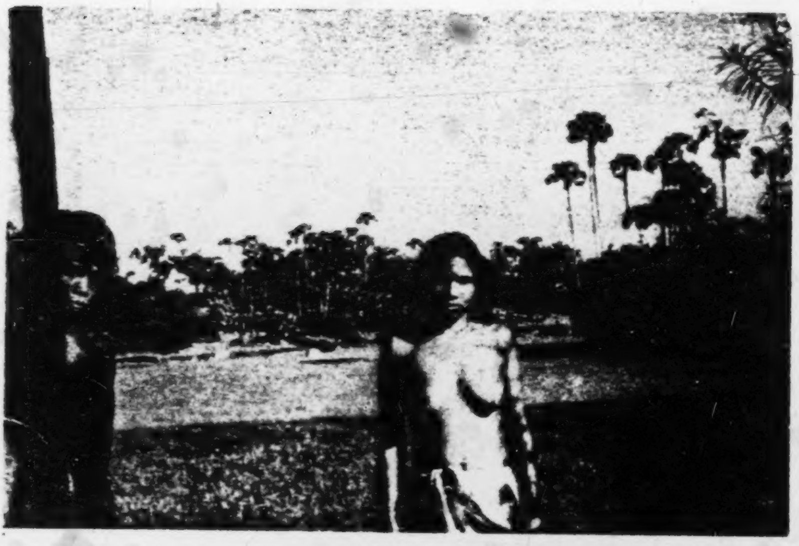

Fig. 11. Kalyani standing at the *Kolla-kurup* Palappuram *kalarikel* household gate (the others are curious onlookers)

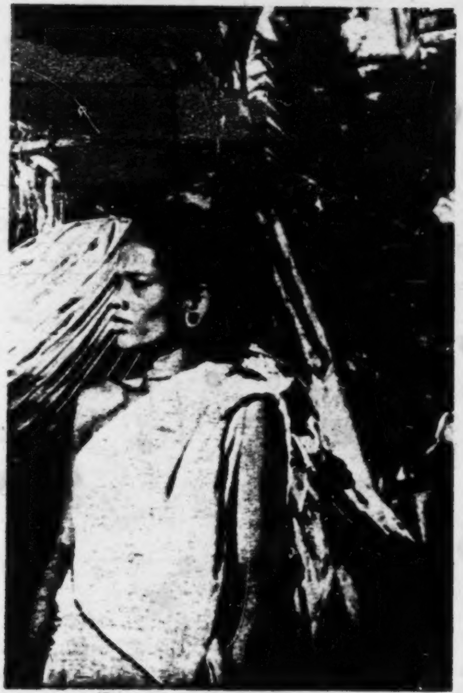

Fig. 12. Kunji of the *Karuwan* Mudrikelparampil household.

[P. 238 - D]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Kolla-kurups
Tol-Kollans

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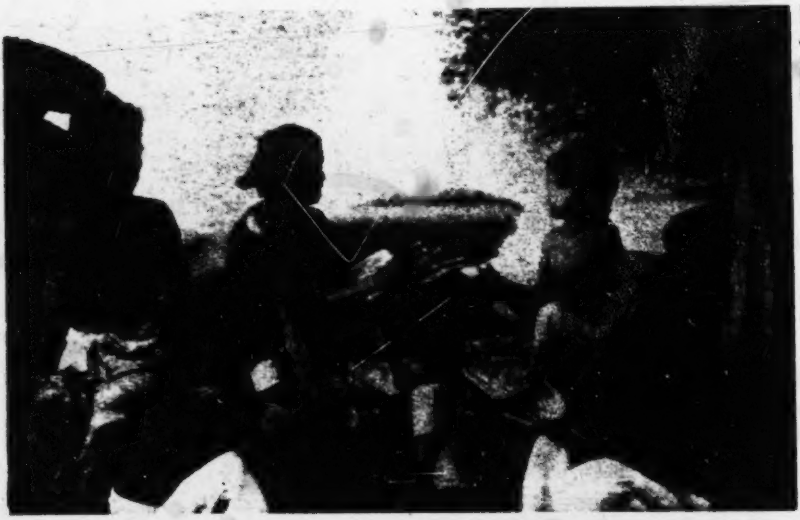

Fig. 13. While Kunji, aged twelve, of the *Kolla-kurup* Palappuram *Kalarikel* sings, the rest of the family sits around her

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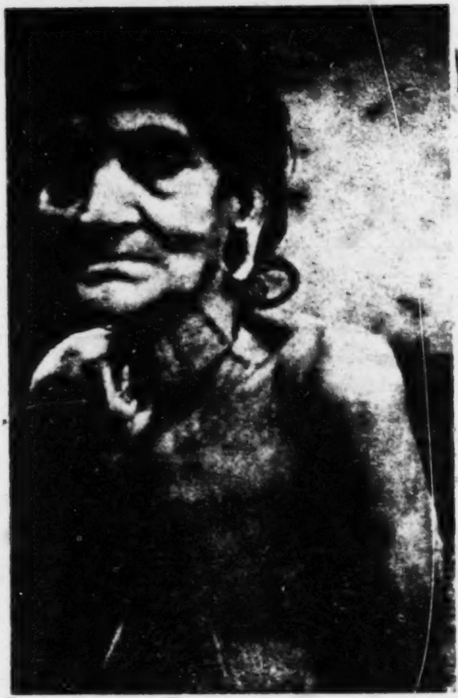

Fig. 14. Old Kurumba, seventy six, of the *Tolkollan* household of Palakarampil village, near Ottappalam. Note the enlarged holes in her ear lobes

[P. 238-E]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
Panans

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516
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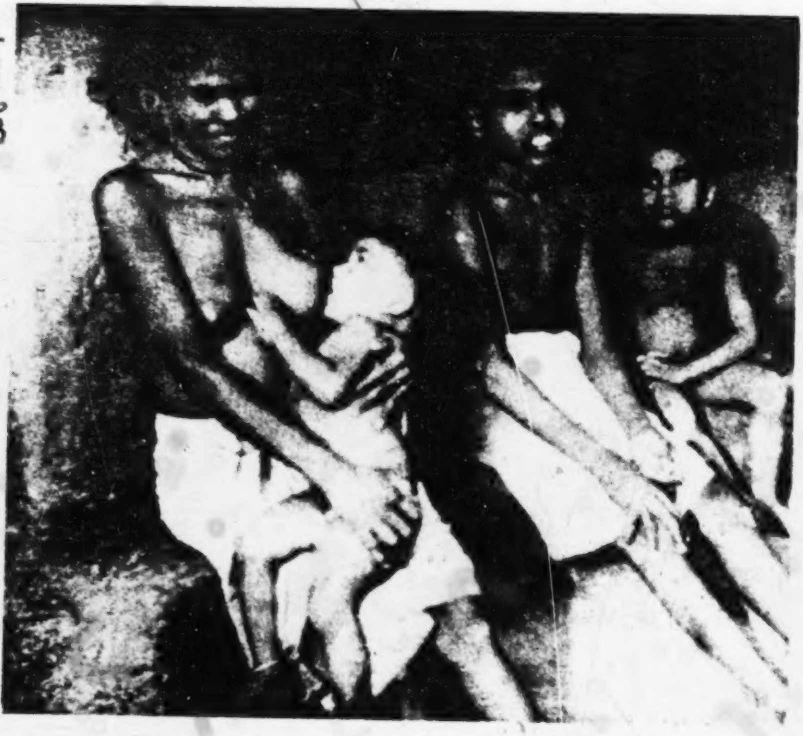

Fig. 15. Sita of the *Panan* Villarkaden household, Kundilpadam *tarawad*. At her breast, Kumaran, then Chami and Narayana.

[P. 238-F]

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Cheruma

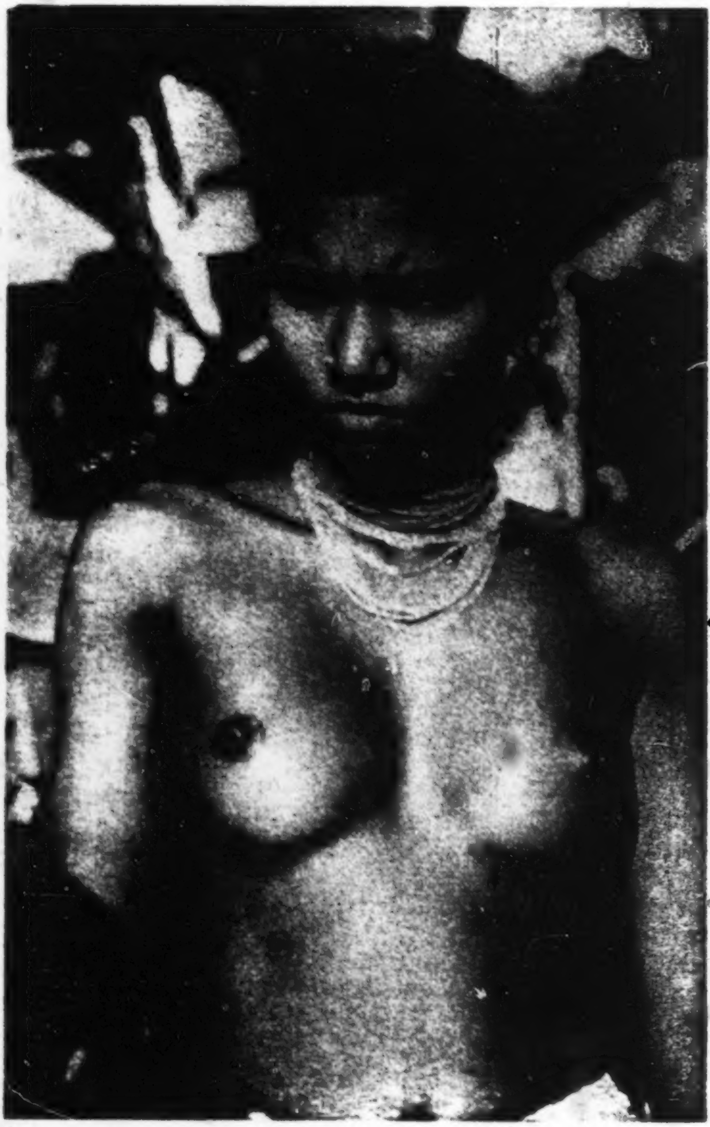

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Fig.16. A handsome girl labourer of the Cheruma caste.

[P 238-G]

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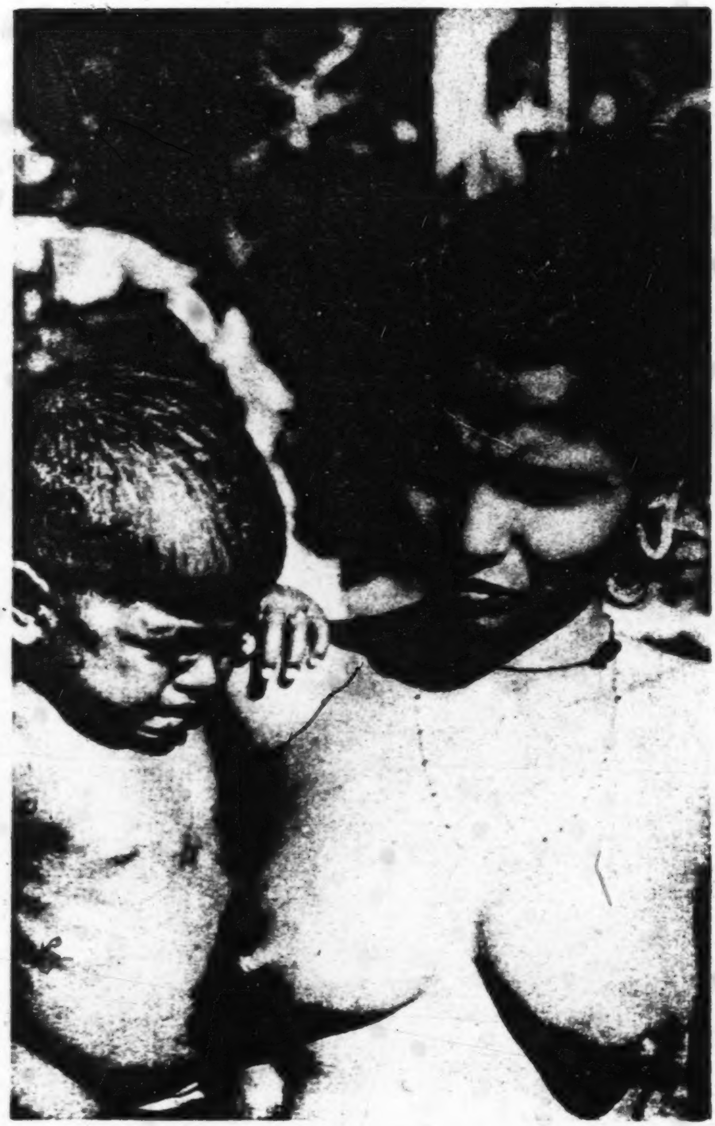

Fig. 17. An aboriginal Parayan woman with her child, in the Zamorin's colony at Chunangad, south Malabar.

[F 838-H]

e) by mutual consent evidenced by a registered instrument attested by not less than two witnesses." 671 [585]

Art. 12: "A polyandrous marriage performed after this Act shall be void." [595]

Chapter III. Maintenance and Guardianship. Three articles.

Chapter IV. Succession.

Five articles on testamentary succession.

Art. 26: "For the purpose of succession there is no distinction between the self-acquired property and the ancestral property or between the property of a male and that of a female except as otherwise provided by this Act." 671 428

Eight articles on Intestate succession.

Art. 28: "Property in respect of which a Thiyya has died intestate devolves upon the wife or husband or upon those who are of the kindred of the deceased in this order and according to the rules herein prescribed."

Art. 29: "When the intestate had left more than one widow, the distribution of inheritance referred to in sections 30, 31, 32 and 33 shall be made as if there is only one widow, all the widows together taking equally one widow's share."

Art. 30. "When the intestate has left a widow, if he has also left a son, or lineal descendant of a son, a share equal to that of a son shall belong to the widow."

Eleven articles on distribution of intestate's property.

Art. 39, (b): "If some of them (lineal descendants) are his (the intestate) sons and others are his daughters, each daughter shall take a half of the share of a son if the intestate is a male, and if the intestate is a female all children shall take equally."

It should be remembered that this legislation is that of a former princely state which has ceased to exist as a separate unit. Today, since the coming into being of the State of Kerala, made up of Malabar, Mahe, Cochin and Travancore, this Act has been superseded by the provisions of the India Code in force now in the whole of the Indian Republic. In accordance with the stipulations of the Code, a larger share of inheritance is granted to daughters and widow than was formerly allowed by the Cochin *Makkathayam* Thiyya Act. [648]

[pp 240-574 not processed]

APPENDIX 1

NARRATIVE OF JOURNEYS MADE

In 1937, having completed my preliminary studies of Anthropology at the London School of Economics, I decided on India as the most suitable place to investigate polyandry. Together with my wife, I set off in the spring, to travel to that country overland by car.

We travelled by way of France, Italy, north Africa (Cyrenaica), Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Irak, Iran (Persia), and entered Baluchistan at Mirjawa in April, 1938. We went on by Quetta, Dera Ghazi Khan and Multan, to Lahore, where we remained for some time, in order to gather information about the possibilities of studying polyandrous peoples in or around the Punjab.

Eventually, I decided to proceed to the Kulu valley in the north, where the Kanets were still said to practise polyandry. As I have related, this proved to be a fallacy, but, while in Kulu during May and the beginning of June 1938, I obtained information about the custom further north, in the Himalayas. I also made a short excursion to Malana, where some polyandry was reputedly in existence, but failed to find any evidence of it.

After the snows had thawed and it became possible to cross the Himalayas, we went over the Rothang Pass (13,050 ft.) into the valley of Lahul. Here, in the capital, Kyelang, we remained for a month, gathering extremely useful information and studying actual polyandrous families for the first time. My interpreters and informants repeatedly mentioned to me during this period that theirs was only a pale reflection of Tibetan polyandry practised still further north. So insistent were they and so interesting did the prospect appear of discovering other people even more addicted to this special form of marriage, that in the end I decided to go on and to return to the Indian plains by way of Kashmir and the trade routes from Kulu to that State.

I hired some ponies from a Tibetan Gya-kar Kham-pa (*rGya-gar K'hams-pa*) horse dealer and caravaneer, called Tsewang Norbu (*Ts'he-*

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WEST Tibetans AJ4

114 *dbang Nor-pu*), who had already brought us to Kyelang from Kulu. Towards the middle of July, with some added personnel recruited from him and placed under the authority of his daughter, Dölma (*sGrol-ma*), we left for Rupchu and Ladak. (For an account of this journey, see *Chevauchée tibétaine*, by the same author, Fernand Nathan editeur, Paris, 1958.)

My first stage was the Shar Shu monastery, near Kolong, where the
[792] Wazir of Lahul and his family resided. Here we attended the annual
[796] masked dance of the lamas, and spent the night at Thakur Partap
[535] Chand's fort-like castle. It was here, too, that I met the *goba* of the
nomads of Rupchu; he was introduced to me by Mangal Chand, alias
amchi Tashi Dawa, and I received an invitation to go to Korzok.

The next day, we continued to Patseo or Dozam (*rDo-Zam*) as it is called in Tibetan, and camped with Tsewang Norbu, chief of the Gya-kar Kham-pa, and his people for a few days until we received the pack ponies and men which I had ordered from him.

This gave us the opportunity to attend the local fair and annual market here and to see for ourselves in what manner goods from the nomads further north were bought or exchanged for other products by the sed-
[536] entary Lahulis. We also attended a local show given by travelling entertainers from Spiti, in which they performed the ancient ceremony of breaking a large stone on the chest of a man.

The climb up over the Baralatcha pass (16,147 ft.) was strenuous, but we were soon over it, and travelling on the flat Lingti plain, along the banks of the Yunan river. We reached the Ser chu and then the Tsarab chu, which we forded to reach Spiti. A short distance further on, we crossed the south-eastern boundary of Kashmir, and continued our progress now through that State.

A few days later, we turned in a south-easterly direction so as to reach the shores of the lake called Tso (*mTs'ho*) Morari (this is the name on the map, but I heard locally that it should be more correctly *Moriri*), where the *goba* resided.

We arrived at our destination towards the beginning of August, not without difficulty because we had had to cross some very high passes, one of them the Lagnyal-la (20,600 ft.). Our caravan, both men and horses, suffered from the unusual altitude and, for some days, were quite unable to go on. But finally, we descended to relatively more reasonable heights and were received, some distance away from where we were going to stay, by the *goba* and his nephew. They were both relatives of the Karpa house in Lahul.

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We were taken to a camp two miles further on where we found some black, yak-hair, Tibetan tents, standing, as they do, like spiders because of their strange construction. There were flocks of sheep about, as well as a few yaks (*gYag*), animals from which our present hosts, the nomads, made their living. A tent, larger than the others, proved to be that of the *goba*, and we were taken close to it and invited to put up our own tents nearby. 114

Very soon after our arrival, we attended a masked dance at the monastery, and the abbot himself acted the Black Hat dancer which is the principal role. There were many spectators present, all the nomads of Rupchu taking a particular and obvious pleasure in what they saw. Another day, we witnessed a ceremony called *zor* (*Zor*) in which a *torma*, made of the head, backbone and entrails of a goat, standing on the animal's skin, was destroyed by lamas armed with great knives, as a way of exorcising devils and evil spirits. [792] [796] [535] [796] [789]

Then came a reception in the *goba's* tent, a festive function at which there were many guests. We were entertained with *chang*, dried meat, *tsampa*, turnips and buttered tea, and the party was a very gay one in which most of the guests, the *goba* and the abbot included, got roaring drunk. [574]

At another reception to which we were invited at the monastery before leaving and in which all our caravaneers received coloured bits of rag as talismans from the hands of the *tulku*, I was able to inform myself about the marital customs of the nomads.

The day after the reception at the *gompa*, we left for Leh, capital of Ladak (7th August, 1938). It was a cold journey as there was frost already on the high passes, and we had three to cross before we reached lower ground near Tso Kar (*mTs'ho dKar*), "the White Lake". From here, we continued down the Gya valley, where we encountered the first houses and fields again and received our first letter in many weeks, addressed to us by the Superintendent of the Moravian Mission in Ley, the Reverend Walter Asboe. A few stages further on, we crossed the Indus near Upshi, and followed its right bank past Himis and Tikse *gompas* to Sheh, one stage before our destination.

On the 22nd August, 1938, we came to Leh in the early afternoon and were received at the entrance of the town by the Moravian Missionary, the local authorities and a crowd of Ladakis, men, women and children. We were taken past the mile long *mani* walls to the Residency in the south-westerly quarter, where we had been authorized to stay during the period of our visit to Ladak. Very soon, we met those who

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114 were to act as interpreters and informants and a useful period of study opened up, destined to last until the 24th of September, 1938.

At that date, we left Leh on our way to the vale of Kashmir, and our first halt was at Spituk Gompa, in the Indus valley, only a few miles from the Ladaki capital. I did not meet Skushog Bakula, the chief lama of Ladak, at his seat in Spituk, because he was away in Central Tibet for his education. But I had a meeting with the acting head of the monastery, from whom I gathered interesting information concerning polyandry in Ü-Tsang (where he had been for his studies).

Six days later, near Ri-dzong, we met the bandit, Norgyäs (*NorrGyas*), from Tibet proper, who had taken refuge in Kashmir to escape from the Tibetan Government. He told us hair-raising tales of his experiences (which, however interesting, it would be irrelevant to narrate here) and begged for my intercession with the Maharaja of Kashmir, so that he, Norgyäs, should not be handed back to Tibet, but allowed asylum in India.

I took advantage of the appearance of this man to question him about polyandry in his country. He was most willing to speak and was informative, believing, no doubt, that if he rendered me this service, I might be better disposed in return to grant him the favour that he had requested of me.

Proceeding along the Treaty Road to Srinagar from Leh, I had occasion to find further polyandrous households, so long as we were in the areas of Buddhist, Tibetan culture, that is as far as Mulbek. On arrival in Kalatse, where we crossed the Indus on a wooden suspension bridge, we camped, and the following day stayed on in order to make some investigations. It was here that I heard, incidentally, about Herodotus' gold-digging ants and had the ancient tale confirmed by the local people (see Bibliography, *A History of Western Tibet* by the Rev. A. H. Francke).

After Mulbek, we passed out of the regions of Tibetan cultural affinity and entered the purely Kashmiri Moslem area. Beyond Kargil, which we left on the 15th of October, 1938, we met some Dards of Dah on the road, travelling with a caravan to their homes, and I noted now Tibetanized these tall, blond men with blue eyes were in their dress and manner. They, too, it appeared, were polyandrous.

Unfortunately, we no longer had time to pay them a visit. After a talk with them, we pressed on to get over the ill-famed Zoji-la, leading to the lower valleys beyond, before the winter snows set in. A few days later we reached our destination, Srinagar, the captial of Kashmir.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala
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We were accompanied on the whole journey from Kulu by Dölma, WT 114 the Gya-kar K'hampa daughter of Tsewang Norbu. With her came two male members of her family, and a former Tibetan monk from the monastery of Tashi Lumpo (*bKra-shis Lhun-po*) in Tsang (*gTsang*), in central Tibet. This man's name was Lobsang (*bLo-bZang*) and he WT [115] proved as knowledgeable a guide concerning everything Tibetan as I could have wished for. Married since he had left the monastery, he and his wife brought their two boys along with them, the youngest being only just over five years of age. From Leh onwards, we exchanged Dölma's two male relatives for new, Ladaki caravaneers under one Tashi (*bKra-shis*), and it was this man and five of his friends who supplied me with the twenty five pack ponies which we used to carry our belongings from Leh in Ladak to Srinagar. Joseph Gergan accompanied us as far as Kargil.

From our travelling companions I heard during our journey that T 114 there was much to study concerning polyandry in Tibet proper. They advised me to try to reach Lhasa and central Tibet if I could, assuring me that in the heart of the country there existed even stranger polyandrous customs than those we had seen on the fringes. They told me that Kalimpong, in the Darjeeling district of the Indian province of Bengal (then undivided), would be a good starting point. Taking their advice, after returning to Lahore from Srinagar in November, we set off in our car to cross practically the whole of northern India, arriving by road in Kalimpong just before Christmas, 1938.

In this very attractive town, situated at the beginning of the main Trade Route to central Tibet, I was able to gather much information concerning Tibetan customs and ways of life. So rewarding was the search and so pleasant did Kalimpong appear to us, that I resolved there and then to return some day for a longer stay. I also contacted those officials of the Government of India (then British) who were responsible for allowing foreign travellers into Tibet, and made arrangements for it to be possible for us to obtain permission to go to Lhasa TO 114 when we next visited this part of the world. We then left for south India, to work among the Todas and the inhabitants of Malabar.

Our way lay over Calcutta, by train to Nagpur and Bombay, where I purchased a new car, having sold the old one in Calcutta on our way through. We made excursions to Poona, Goa and Hyderabad, and from there went on to Bezwada and Madras. After our visits to Pondicherry and places of archaelogical interest in the Tamil country, we motored up to the Nilgiris, taking a house for the summer of 1939, in Coonoor.

T 114 It was from there that I made my first research work among the Todas and other hill tribes of the district.

K 114 In August, we descended to the south-west coast, passing through Mysore and Mercara in Coorg. We arrived in Tellicherry, in Malabar, at the end of the month, when the clouds of war were already gathering fast on the international political horizon. The first days of September found us in this remote part of India, on a visit to the French possession of Mahé. On learning that World War II had started, we immediately packed and left, returning to Madras where we sought a passage home.

CCC After waiting some time, we were told that we might embark on a ship of the Danish East Asiatic Company in Colombo. We proceeded there in all haste, but were kept waiting sufficiently long in the Sinhalese capital to be able to visit the place and gather some anthropological information of value. We resolved to return here as soon as the war was over, should we survive it.

I spent the next eight years in the Greek Army. I was demobilized in 1947, and immediately took steps to resume my anthropological work. I was able to do this at the beginning of 1949, when my wife and I arrived back in Ceylon by air in the February of that year. This time I had the leisure and means to study Sinhalese polyandry and, after obtaining the necessary information, as I have said, put up our camp in the interior, in the Kandyan region of Ratnapura.

K 114 We remained here until April, and then moved to Cochin in south-west India. A short spell of work in Ernakulam and the surrounding country, including Travancore, yielded interesting data. But very soon, T [114] the temperature became excessive, and conditions of work insupportable, so that we drove up to the Nilgiris for the summer, resuming my investigations of Toda polyandry which I had left off ten years before. We stayed in Ootacamund from the beginning of May until the end of September, 1949.

In the autumn, we returned to Malabar, this time to Shoranur, in the Walluvanad taluk of the southern part of the district, as this appeared to be the best area in which to study polyandry in what was soon to become the State of Kerala. We were there until December of the same year, and got to know the people living all around us quite well.

While in Malabar, I did not only visit the polyandrous communities. I was desirous of getting acquainted with the other inhabitants of the country, on the principle that the elements of a society are interrelated and evolve in connection with each other. I also attended a Nambudri Brahmin wedding, visited a Nambudri *mana* (the name by which the

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large domains of the upper caste of Kerala are known), got to know all the dignitaries of the various sects into which the Christian community is split, made the acquaintance of the Jews in Mattancheri, met the Maharaja of Cochin and his court, was received by the Moslem Makhdun Tangal of Ponani, as I have related (see page 168), made excursions to the Western Ghats, at Kalladikkodi where the Malayans have their main shrine, was shown over a rehabilitation centre for Nayadis in Travancore, a blacksmith's village in the same State, and a Parayan colony belonging to the Zamorin at Chunangad in south Malabar, saw Cherumans at work in a large Nayar *Kanamdar's* farm, attended Kathakali dances at night and receptions by prominent Nayar, Ambalavasi and Samantan personalities. Generally speaking, I travelled extensively through the entire area, meeting as many elements of the population as possible, regardless of social status and condition, making it a point, rather, of getting to know them all. K 114

We returned to Kalimpong in 1950. It was February when, eleven years after our first visit, we arrived once again in the little frontier town at the very gate of central Tibet. I immediately set everything in motion to try and enter the forbidden land, my hand srengthened this time by the fact that I had joined and was now a member of the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia. It was as leader of the latter's second team, that I had come back. T 114 122

In the intervening years, great changes had, however, taken place. India was now an independent country since August the 15th, 1947, and had, only a few days before, been proclaimed a Republic. Tibet, on her side, was going through a troubled and anxious period of her history. With the fall of the Kuomintang regime in China, her government had asked the Nationalist Chinese Mission in the capital to leave, in the vain hope that its removal would avoid having to receive a Communist delegation in its stead.

During the whole spring and summer of 1950, the threat of a Chinese Communist military invasion of Tibet became more and more acute. It was worrying not only government leaders in the Tibetan capital, but also those now responsible for the destinies of India in New Delhi. The result, as far as we were concerned, was that no one in either of these two centres took kindly to our request for a permit to conduct anthropological research in Tibet, and rather looked upon us as intruders with possibly suspicious ulterior motives.

Neither of the two governments to whom we addressed our demands for permission to cross the frontier apparently wished, however, to give

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW11 Kerala
Tibet AJI

114 us a straight refusal. In truly Oriental manner, they abstained from
120 being either affirmative or negative. After considerable "misunderstanding" had arisen between us and the Indian officials, we were advised to address ourselves to the Tibetan authorities. When we did this, the latter asked very courteously but firmly that we "kindly postpone" our journey.

In November, 1950, Communist Chinese forces crossed the border of the eastern frontier of Kham (*K'hams*), and proceeded to march on Lhasa. The Dalai Lama made an abortive attempt to flee to India, and when he was not given express permission to cross into that country, settled down with his court for some months at the border town of Yatung, in the Chumbi valley. He returned to his capital at the beginning of 1951, with the arrival from China, through India, of the commander in chief of the occupation forces, a Chinese general who insisted that the Tibetan God-king should accompany him back to the traditional seat of government.

The outcome of all this was that I failed to enter Tibet. I had to content myself with remaining in Kalimpong, on the border. Never-
114 theless, circumstances did favour me in the way that the Chinese invasion of the country brought a wave of Tibetan temporary refugees to Kalimpong, people generally of means, who decided to weather the storm on the Indian side of the frontier and wait and see which way events would develop.

From these people, as well as from the community of three thousand five hundred permanent Tibetan residents in Kalimpong, I was able to gather considerable information of the kind which I had come to collect. It was, of course, not the same as studying the people in their own, national environment, but it was the closest I could get, and not unsatisfactory at that. Together with my own research work, I was active in carrying out those tasks which had been assigned to me by
122 the Danish Expedition. I purchased considerable quantities of ethno-
126 graphical artefacts, anthropometrically measured over five thousand
Tibetans, gathered medical and demographical statistics, blood groups and dietary specimens, took great quantities of photographs and considerable lengths of motion picture film, not to mention learning the language as I had planned, and getting to know a large number of Tibetans from every class of the population in their little known country.

With occasional breaks in 1952 and again in 1953–54 and 1955, I remained in Kalimpong until February of 1957. Political tension in the area, far from relaxing after the Chinese Communist military oc-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala

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cupation of Tibet had been completed, was, on the contrary, rather intensified. It has not ceased to grow since then, and today has reached the point where it has become well nigh impossible for a Western anthropologist to carry on with research work among Tibetans.

I was, however, not really inconvenienced by this. By the time the situation had deteriorated to this extent, we were on our way back to Europe from India. Since 1957, I have been busy compiling the information which I had gathered, and which is the subject of the present thesis.

[p. 584]

APPENDIX 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In all four fields of my ethnographical research, Ceylon, Kerala, the Nilgiris and the Himalayas, I was obliged to make use of informants and interpreters in order to carry out the work. Only in Kalimpong, when I had set up my headquarters there from 1950 to 1956, did I eventually do without interpreters, having learnt Tibetan sufficiently well towards 1952 to be able to dispense with assistance of this kind. Nevertheless, I remained, of course, dependent on informants.

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To all these helpers in the field I am extremely grateful, because without their aid it would have been impossible to carry out the ethnographic study. Except for Kerala, where I have been expressly asked not to make any specific mentions, I would like to thank each and every one personally by name. In the case of the interpreter with whom I worked among the Todas, I would also like to give a short synopsis of his personality and life-history, because it appears to me essential that it is realized fully through what human medium the necessary information was gathered and contact with the tribe established.

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In Ceylon, concerning Mr. G. H. Ellawala with whom I worked in Ratnapura, I cannot sufficiently express how great is my debt towards him. Not only did he take time off to accompany me to the dwellings of some of his poorest and most humble tenants (and all those of my readers who know the Orient will appreciate what this means), but he also acted as interpreter himself during our visits and supplied me with much honest and outspoken information in explanation of the material that I was gathering. Long after I had left Ceylon, he furthermore very willingly wrote to me additional data of which I was in need, replying promptly and fully to the, sometimes for him, obscure questions which I put to him about marriage rules and the patrilineal and matrilineal descent groups in the Kandyan provinces.

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In Kerala, thanks to the kindness and hospitality of the managing director of the Metal Industries Ltd., Shoranur, Sri A. N. Poduval, I

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11
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was able to park my caravan in the compound of the factory, and from there to conduct my work in the surrounding villages, both in the Walluvanad taluk and in north Cochin. I am greatly indebted to the then Collector of Malabar, Sri Prasad, for the assistance rendered to me during my stay in Kerala, for without this help it would not have been possible to gather so much information in so short a time.

Thanks are also due to Dr. A. Aiyappan, Superintendent of the Government Museum, Egmore, Madras, my fellow-student at the London School of Economics where we both attended the seminars and lectures of the late Professor Br. Malinowski. Through Dr. Aiyappan's never failing advice and active interest I saved considerable time and effort in going straight to that part of Kerala most propitious for the study of polyandry.

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While working in the Nilgiris, both before and after World War II, it would have been good to have been able to speak Toda. It would have enabled me to gather information direct, which would have been an incomparable asset during my long period of research in that area. From the wider point of view, it did not seem worth while, however, to go to the trouble of learning Toda. It is spoken by only a very small number of individuals who, being themselves illiterate, have no literature at all. It is besides a Dravidian tongue, and therefore difficult for Europeans to master quickly. I felt that I would prefer to concentrate later on acquiring Tibetan, something which would be of far wider use to me in very many fields other than the relatively narrow study of polyandry.

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I therefore turned down the idea of learning the language and, because of this, was obliged to work through an interpreter. In the choice of the latter, I was exceptionally fortunate. Very early, during the first months of my stay in the Nilgiris, in the summer of 1939, thanks to the help of Miss C. F. Ling of the Church of England Zenana Mission, I got to know Kanvarsathi-Sunderdoss, a Christian Toda convert, who had previously served Dr. M. B. Emeneau, of the University of California at Berkeley, in a like capacity, for three years, and who was to prove just as excellent an assistant to me as he had been to this predecessor of mine among the Todas.

Kanvarsathi, although belonging to the little colony of Christian Todas described by Emeneau (*The Christian Todas*, see Bibliography), was far from having developed an aversion for his heathen fellows. What was more, he was liked and accepted to a remarkable degree by the latter, a most happy state of affairs when it came to making use of

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AW1.1 Kerala
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115 him to delve into the intimate details of tribal customs. He was also a very intelligent individual who fully grasped the interest of anthropological research, and was keen to make use of the results in the hope of improving the material condition of the Todas. Without his assistance, it is doubtful whether I would have acquired so penetrating an insight into the Toda way of life, something for which I am extremely grateful to him.

Kanvarsathi's father was a rather notorious character among the
[589] Todas called Kiunervan (Table 14 of Rivers' genealogical tables) who had no less than eleven wives, one after the other. Kanvarsathi was the only son of the eleventh wife, and was born in 1905 at the Toda village of Paletkwar (known as Attakoraimand in the language of the Badagas) near Or, on the left-hand side of the Ootacamund-Gudalur road. Two months after his birth, his mother died, and his half-sister, Sinkup, later wife of Ujar (48, Rivers' Ushadz, one of my best informants), a daughter of his father's second wife, took him away with her and very grudgingly looked after him.

Six years later, Kiunervan also died, leaving one boy, Kanvarsathi, and two elder girls. The total number of his father's offspring had not been very great, despite the eleven wives. There were, altogether, only three sons and two daughters, of which two boys died before Kanvarsathi was born, and the two girls after, leaving him the sole survivor. Strictly speaking he became the only heir to his father's estate, which
[550] consisted, at the time of death, of sixty buffaloes and some gold ornaments – quite a considerable fortune according to Toda standards. But
[409] because he was a minor, his father's brothers' sons – his first cousins on his father's side – took the property into their custody until he should come of age. Being, however, most unscrupulous, and believing that Kanvarsathi would never find out, these cousins gradually disposed of the estate to their own advantage, so that when the time came for them to hand it over, all that he got were six buffaloes and two pairs of ear-rings.

115 When he was ten years old, he found out the real state of affairs and
691 how he was being done out of his legitimate inheritance. He appealed against this to the Toda Government Agent, the Monegar, and to the most influential Toda of his day, the famous Kuriolv (52, properly speaking, Kiusharf in Toda, the other name being Badaga), but to no avail. These important people could not be bothered with the complaints of so small a boy, and all he got for his trouble was to be made to look after their buffaloes. This unfairness deeply wounded him, and

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala
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continued to smoulder in his heart until, in 1917, he decided to take 115
the matter to Court, as a result of which he did receive the remaining [691]
property.

Before this episode, however, his half-sister had died leaving him all alone. It was then that Miss C. F. Ling of the Church of England [797] Zenana Mission took an interest in him and removed him to the school which she ran close to his native village at the 8th mile of the Ootacamund-Gudalur road. As a consequence of this, he was eventually converted to Christianity. After he had received the meagre remnants of his father's estate, Miss Ling sent him away to another school at Palamkottah in the Tinnevely district for further studies, and he passed there through the third form. In 1923 she sent him to Assam, to the Welsh Mission, with the idea that he should learn to be a motor mechanic, I do not quite know to which part of that large and distant province he went, as he was rather vague in his description of it, but he did say that it was wild and underdeveloped in the extreme, with no roads at all, let alone motor traffic. So, instead of being trained as a mechanic, he was made to look after the station missionary's horse as a groom, which enraged him since he had just come into what little there was left of his property and had been persuaded to leave the Nilgiris under what were apparently false pretences.

After only a very few months of this most unsatisfactory situation, he ran away and managed somehow to reach Calcutta in search of work. But because of the language, Bengali, which he did not speak, he found this extremely difficult to obtain, and had to content himself with a hand to mouth exsistence. In the end, he got a job as a junior gardener with a kind missionary, the Rev. H. Kehel. He remained a year with the latter, and when he had saved enough money to pay for the railway fare, he took the train and returned to Madras. In that city he joined the large motor transport company, Addison and Co., where after twelve months' apprenticeship, he eventually got his driver's licence and became one of the firm's mechanics, keeping his position until 1928.

At this time his health deteriorated. He underwent a serious operation for a gastric ulcer and had to give up his work. He returned to the Nilgiris the following year, and began to take a lively interest in the well-being and progress of the community from which he sprang, the Todas. He joined the Collector of the Nilgiris' Toda Amelioration Scheme and was trained as an agriculturalist. He thus became an agri- [242] cultural consultant for the tribe, advising it on such matters, and using his newly acquired knowledge as a means of livelihood.

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In 1931, he married a Tamil woman (that is, someone not of his community) and his eldest son was born in 1932. He subsequently had two more children, two daughters, in 1943 and 1936.

It was in 1935 that he began acting as interpreter and "guide", as he termed it, to Dr. M. B. Emeneau, and he continued to do so until 1938. He also served others in the same capacity during this time, and his health, happily, remained good. In 1939, he acted as my interpreter, but in 1942 he became seriously ill again with his old affliction, and, in Travancore, in the American Hospital of Trivandrum, was successfully operated upon for a second time. On his return he became an influential member of the Toda Welfare Committee, a body set up by the Collector of the Nilgiris to assist the community.

Since then, he has been residing at the Toda Christian colony near Fern Hill, Ootacamund, where he has a small plot of land and a vegetable garden, the produce of which he sells in the local market. From the latest news that I have received from him, I understand that he is still carrying on with these same occupations, working hard and with a considerable measure of success to improve the lot of his fellow Todas, to whom he is attached with a devotion amounting nearly to a fanatical "nationalism", for he refuses to let his erstwhile connection with a Christian Mission "detribalize" him in any way.

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Those who have helped me in the same way as the informants and interpreters mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, have been far greater in number in the areas of Tibetan affinity, in the Himalayas, than in any other of the fields which I visited. In addition to assistants and interpreters of the kind I have already described, they also include Tibetologists and teachers from whom I obtained, not only information about Tibetan polyandry, but also a general knowledge of everything Tibetan which has stood me in good stead.

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First and foremost among such helpers should be mentioned Dr. George Nikolaivitch Roerich. Initially, we became acquainted in 1938, when he was residing with his father, the late Professor Nicolas Roerich, his mother and his brother, Svetoslav, at Nagar, in the Kulu valley of the Punjab. It was through him that I met the Gya-kar K'ham-pa chieftain, Tsewang Norbu, and the former monk, Lobsang, from Shigatse. Through his intermediary too, my wife and I equipped ourselves properly for the 600 miles trek from Kulu to Kashmir over Lahul, Rupchu and Ladak.

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Our second meeting was in Kalimpong, West Bengal, in 1950. Disturbances resulting from the partition of India into India proper and

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Pakistan had forced his family – minus his father who had died during the war – to move their residence from Kulu, and they had settled down temporarily in this small frontier town at the end of the Trade Route to Lhasa. Dr. Roerich was instrumental in obtaining good Tibetan teachers for me; he greatly assisted me in the task of meeting prominent personalities from Tibet and in obtaining the ethnographical artefacts and books which I had been assigned to purchase for the Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia. A great Tibetan scholar of a quality rarely to be found today, he was unfailing in his willingness to help and gave me great assistance, during the seven years that I was in residence in Kalimpong, in my efforts to learn Tibetan correctly and to gather information about the customs and ways of the people of Tibet. I was indeed fortunate in having made the acquaintance and gained the friendship of so outstanding an authority.

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During my stay in Lahul in the summer of 1938, I was greatly assisted in the initial research work by the Reverend F. A. Peter of the Moravian Mission in Kyelang. Through him I came into contact with my first polyandrous families, and his knowledge of the region and of its inhabitants freely put at my disposal, was a very great help at a time when I was beginning my exploration of Tibetan culture.

Through the Reverend Peter I got to know the principal chieftain of the valley of Lahul, Wazir Thakur Partap Chand. This man, who spoke perfect English and was unfailing in his desire to be of assistance and to receive me with proper hospitality in his domain, gave me considerable information concerning the polyandry of the valley. Always outspoken and sincere, he made no attempt to disguise the nature of the institution as practised in Lahul, and the data that I gathered through his intermediary is among the best that I have.

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In Rupchu, I was left more or less to myself and, in the absence even of interpreters, had to make the best of my English-speaking Punjabi bearer and of the Hindusthani which he and Lobsang could speak together.

At Leh, however, in Ladak, during my stay there of over a month, I again found invaluable helpers and interpreters, through whom material of even greater value to my research work was gathered.

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Thus my thanks are due to the Reverend Walter Asboe, superintendent of the Moravian Mission, who welcomed me on arrival in Leh and never ceased during the whole period of my visit to take an interest in my quest and to put everything he knew of the people and customs at my disposal. A long experience and a sympathetic understanding of

WT 115 the ways of the Ladakis enabled the Reverend Asboe to enrich greatly my store of knowledge.

WT 115 [122] Through his intermediary, I made the acquaintance of the late Joseph Gergan (*dGe-rGan*), native minister of the Mission, and of his son-in-law, Nono Tseten P'hüntzok (*Ts'he-brTan P'hun-Ts'hogs*). T 115 The first of these two outstanding Christian personalities of Ladak acted as my mentor and teacher in the Tibetan dialect of Ladak; he was also my guide during my leisurely return to Srinagar from Leh. His son-in-law was my interpreter and helper during my interviews with polyandrous households in the country round Leh and, later, even in Kalimpong, he was most helpful in furnishing me with additional material and information as well as in assisting me to give greater accuracy to the data collected.

T 115 At the other end of India, during the years in which I was in residence in Kalimpong after World War II, I made considerable use of the knowledge and good will of Mr. G. Tharchin of the Tibetan "Mirror" Press in that town. I had already met this learned man, proficient in both English and Tibetan, a native of Kunu (*K'hu-nu* (*Kunawar*) or Rampur Bashahar), in the U.P., during my first visit to Kalimpong in 1938–39. He had just returned from Lhasa at the time, after having accompanied there the late Theos Bernard as guide and interpreter. T 115 122 On my return eleven years later, he not only helped me to collect the material that I wanted and to make Tibetan contacts such as I desired, but also gave me lessons in the language and taught me the rudiments of reading and writing Tibetan.

Earlier on, soon after my arrival in Kalimpong in 1950, Dr. George Roerich had found me an excellent first teacher in Tibetan. His name was Champa Sangta (*Pyams-pa gSang-bTag*) and he was a refugee in India. Formerly, he had been jester and handyman to the Regent of T [662] Tibet, Radeng Rimpoche (*Rwa-gDeng Rin-po-ch'he*), assassinated in 1947 in an obscure political intrigue. Reprisals had been taken by the Tibetan Government against the partisans of the murdered leader, and Champ Sangta being one of these, he had escaped over the border to avoid capture. He spoke an excellent Lhasa dialect (the *lingua franca* of the country) and was, besides, well versed in honorific terms, so important for a foreigner to learn if he does not wish to be accused of T [126] speaking "coolie language". He was also one of the three best singers of Tibet and often gave me examples of his art, some of which I sound-T [212] recorded. Unfortunately, he was illiterate, and could neither read nor write. He spoke no other language than his own, and this forced me to

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understand what he said and to learn to express myself in Tibetan much 115
faster than anything else. He was assisted, however, in the beginning 122
by a young Kalimpong-born Tibetan boy, Kesang Tsewang (*bsKal-bZang Ts'hed-dbang*), who had a smattering of English and thus enabled me to get over the first difficulties.

After I had progressed sufficiently in my studies with these teachers, I was fortunate enough to meet Lobsang P'hüntzok (*bLo-bZang P'hun-Ts'hogs*), then Tibetan Government teacher at St. Joseph's College, North Point, Darjeeling. The son of the Tibetan State Oracle at Nechung (*Nai-Ch'hung*) in Lhasa, he was a monk official, *tsetung* (*rTse-Drung*) of the Government, and well versed in all matters both lay and ecclesiastical. His knowledge of the language, forms and manners as well as of the customs and history of Tibet was such that I can easily say that I learned more with this teacher during my sojurn in Kalimpong than with any other. He is today in charge of the Tibetan programme of All India Radio in New Delhi.

Among the members of the Tibetan aristocracy who came to India 115
during the first phase of the Chinese Communist occupation of their country, none was more obliging and helpful in giving me whatever information I needed than "Mary" (really Rinchen Dölma) Tsarong Taring (*Rin-Ch'hen sGrol-ma Ts'ha-ron aP'hreg-Ring*). From her I obtained genealogies and data concerning the great families of the Tibetan capital including that of H.H. the Dalai Lama. She also dictated her entire life story to me, with a view to having it published eventually in the West. But later, changing her mind, under the influence of her husband, I believe, she asked for it back from me and destroyed it prior to returning with her family to Chinese Communist occupied Tibet. In fairness to her, I did not keep a copy, so that this interesting record was entirely lost.

Another member of the aristocracy, but from Tsang this time and not from Lhasa, was Sönam Wangchuk Dele Rabden Sä (*bSod-nam Sdbang-P'hyug bDe-legs Rab-brTan Sras*) with whom I became extremely friendly and who rendered me quite exceptional services. It was he who made it possible for me to study the particular type of polyandry of Central Tibet in which fathers and sons share a common wife, because he himself was married to his father's second spouse. Through his intermediary, I obtained artefacts and books from Tibet which would no doubt have been quite impossible to obtain otherwise. He
helped me to practise my Lhasa dialect with him, correcting me in his [122]
very good English when I made mistakes; he gave me invaluable in-

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115 [122] formation about land-tenure and kinship terms in his country, himself taking a personal interest in my research work and seeming to understand its scientific implications.

Lastly, I should mention the late Reginald Fox and his wife, Nyima (*Nyi-ma*). Fox, a Londoner born in 1900, was for fifteen years in charge of radio communications at the British Residency in Lhasa, and after the independence of India became head of the Tibetan Government's Wireless Service. He had an unrivalled knowledge of Tibetan customs and ways of life. This was partly due to his personal acumen and interest in such matters but also, and to an even greater degree no doubt, to the fact that he had married a native woman (actually a Bhutanese, but resident in Lhasa since early childhood) and had lived the life of the ordinary people of the country. From him, with his European background, I was able to get information based on a knowledge of our own ways and seen from a comparative point of view such as no one else was able to give me. In particular, Fox was most informative concerning the problem of jealousy in Tibetan polyandrous households, and what I learned about this subject, I mainly obtained [122] from him. His wife, Nyima, was also of considerable assistance, not only in helping me to practise speaking Tibetan, but also in allowing [125] herself to be subject to psychological tests and in supplementing what her husband had to say about the position of women in her country with what she herself knew of the matter.

To all these people in the field, my grateful thanks are due. Through them I learned everything that I know about the Kandyan Sinhalese, the castes of Kerala, the Todas of the Nilgiris and the Tibetans.

In compiling the data thus gathered and in giving it the suitable theoretical framework, both as far as the background is concerned and in regard to the conclusions reached at the end, I have received very much help and invaluable advice from Professor Raymond Firth, B.A., Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics, University of London. For his unwavering support and his infinite patience, I express my deepest thanks to him, the supervisor of this thesis. I have been in close touch with him ever since the early days of my anthropological studies, when as Dr. Raymond Firth, he was Lecturer in Anthropology with Professor Malinowski. The old friendship that links us has been, I know, very greatly instrumental in giving this dissertation the anthropological character which it has, and I am most grateful to him for his guidance.

I wish to thank Mrs. Isabel Muir for reviewing and typing paragraph

2 of Chapter I, Section II and Chapter 3 of Section II. Finally, I want to express my wholehearted appreciation and gratitude to Miss M. C. A. Guyon de Saint-Prix, M.A. (Oxon), for reading and correcting my drafts and assisting me to present ideas and data in the correct literary form. She has been a most excellent collaborator.

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sambandham - institutionalized form of sexual union between men of a higher caste and women of a lower one.

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[For detailed information (including genealogies) on polyandrous families in the Walluvanad Taluk of South Malabar and in North Cochin see category 116, pp. 175-225.]